commonweal

The Editors:
CHRISTMAS, ISLAM
& THE AYATOLLAH

ONE DOLLAR

DECEMBER 21, 1979

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Correspondence

On the one hand

Los Angeles, Ca.

To the Editors: It is both surprising and dismaying to find a critic with the perception of Colin L. Westerbeck, spouting the standard Hollywood line about Francis Ford Coppola in his review of *Apocalypse Now* [Oct. 12]. This idea of the "megalomaniac" director has been used by producers for years to keep artists like Von Stroheim, Griffiths and Welles in line. Now critics are urged to become hatchetmen, for the sake of "purity" in the arts.

From the beginning the press has ridiculed Coppola's desire to plunge himself thoroughly into the biggest trauma of our age. Directors may spend millions on spy spoofs or space pictures but for a man to devote himself to something important was considered by them an outrage. Westerbeck, the box office wizard, even dubs the picture a financial disaster (though it's doing far better than other epics of recent years such as "Catch 22," "A Bridge Too Far" and "The Wiz").

The saddest part is that Mr. Westerbeck has like other shortsighted reviewers jumped on the elements (particularly Kurtz) that don't work and refused to acknowledge how well Coppola has transformed Conrad's jungle where the native bears the white man's burden to Vietnam where the black serviceman does the same. In this deliberately ambiguous spectacle (as any film about Vietnam must be), he gives us the psychedelic reality behind the "TV war" we witnessed. Coppola shows us our country's collective "heart of darkness": that despite good intentions through cultural superiority we wreaked havoc on a country and our own self-image. To place us in the center of the biggest military blunder our country has ever made and help us to feel the pain and waste is a mark of the highest artistry. Unfortunately, it is disdained by jaded critics, suffering from critical hardening of the arteries.

DAN O'NEILL

And on the other

Portland, Maine

To the Editors: I recently read Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.'s review of the film *Other People's Money* [Nov. 9]. Once again I have come away from one of his reviews convinced that he is as fine a critic as anyone writing today, neither captious nor bombastic nor vindictive. His point about creative artists' respecting the ambiguities of life—brought out in the context of *Angi Vera*—struck home to me.

JOHN GREGOLI

Up the rebels

Saxtons River, Vt.

To the Editors: "The Rebel Function in Catholicism" by Edward Cuddy is a gem in the very good September 14th issue.

Justice bids adding that H.L. Mencken was author of the aphorism on Catholic church reaction to new ideas (first wrong, later not wrong but dangerous, and eventually, that was what the church really taught all the time) which Cuddy quotes from Gregory Baum.

Except for *The American Language* Mencken seems to be remembered today only by those once youthful rebels whose hero he was in the late twenties and early thirties. While he was often denounced on the grounds of anti-Catholicism and anti-religion in general, his tweaking the noses of all authority and his disdain for hypocrisy in any guise were audacious, astringent, familiar and frequently quoted.

No one could have been more astonished than H.L. Mencken, were he still with us, at this aphorism not only being taken over fifty-odd years later by one of the continent's most distinguished theologians but attributed to that theologian himself.

MARJORIE MURPHY

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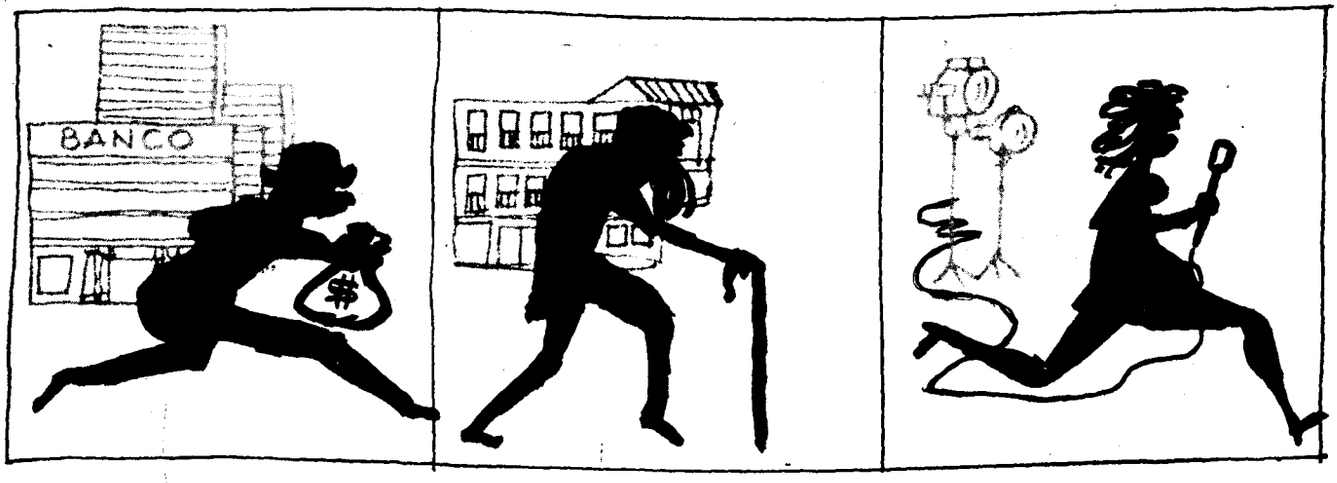

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mitment. Some stayed for a summer, some for a year. Many settled in for stints of five or ten years. Even those whose dependence on Providence is as utter as that of Mother Teresa have expressed wonderment at the continued existence of a movement grounded on so frail and uncertain a basis as the appearance of new volunteers as old ones left. This happened not only at the New York houses, but in the forty or more houses that have sprung up at various times throughout the country.

"It was Peter's idea," wrote Stanley in an introduction to Peter Maurin's *Easy Essays*, "that the voluntary poor should live with the involuntary poor to give them hope and love." This Stanley did for his entire adult life.

"He was our first volunteer," Dorothy Day recalled. "Stanley walked into our apartment on East Fifteenth Street. He came during the first month after we had distributed the *Catholic Worker* on Union Square. He was from a Lithuanian family in Brooklyn. He began coming in every day to do what needed doing, selling the paper and going on errands. He worked without pay and for a long time he had to walk over the bridge from Williamsburg and up to Fifteenth Street."

The Catholic Worker movement came into being when, at the suggestion of George Shuster, then managing editor of *Commonweal*, Peter Maurin came to meet Dorothy Day in December 1932. The appearance of the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, and its distribution in Union Square on May Day 1933 is considered to be the birthday of the movement.

Stanley became a friend of Peter Maurin, a Frenchman versed in history, in particular the history of the Catholic church. He listened to Maurin's call for a renewal of Christian life and of society through gentle personalism and through a three-fold program of Houses of Hospitality, Farming Communities and Round-Table Discussions. The discussions started immediately, with Peter bringing Carlton Hayes, Parker Moon and other speakers to the Fifteenth Street apartment. Peter felt that his call for Houses of Hospitality would find a response in each diocese and even in each parish. In a period of depression and massive unemployment, he felt sure that Farming Communities (which would serve as agronomic universities) would be initiated, since, he pointed out, "There is no unemployment on the land." When no houses of hospitality materialized and no farming communities sprang up, the Catholic Worker responded in its own way.

First slum apartments, and then whole houses, became havens for the homeless in New York's lower East Side. They were not havens of peace, since their residents were of wildly different types. Fights were constant. Stanley, with his gentle manner and quick humor, was a born reconciler. His gifts were often called upon in what he called "our Houses of Hostility." Stanley enjoyed selling the *Catholic Worker* (official price a penny a copy) on the streets of New York. Like Ammon Hennacy, he was always ready with the unexpected retort. When, at a leftist meeting, a woman berated him for spreading religious propaganda, asserting loudly, "I don't believe in God," Stanley responded, "I don't believe in women."

It was not long before the Catholic Worker had found farms near New York and Stanley divided his time between the city and the various farming communities. After the Catholic Worker bought the farm in Tivoli, he moved there and spent the greater part of his time after 1964 in the country setting. There he wrote his articles and reviews for the paper, of which he was one of the editors. He took to photography and set up a dark room where he developed the photographs that became a pictorial history of the Catholic Worker movement. He became what Dorothy Day called "our dear guest-master" to countless visitors and to the people who came to the PAX and Peacemaker Conferences held at Tivoli. At Tivoli he wrote a history of the Catholic Worker movement entitled *Wings of the Dawn*. He contributed an introduction to Dorothy Day's *On Pilgrimage: The Sixties*, and edited selections from her work under the title *Meditations*.

Aging was kind to him. Early pictures of Stanley show him as a thin young man with a high-bridged nose and a stand-up mass of wavy hair. In later years, his face was fuller and never seemed to lose a sunny expression. His hairline receded but his grizzly gray hair was still thick and wavy. Stanley's rock-like faith as a follower of Jesus never faltered. He attended Mass daily when that was possible and led the evening prayer of Compline daily when he was at Tivoli or Maryhouse. Community prayer meant much to him and his enthusiastic singing of the "Salve Regina" at the conclusion of Compline is a strong memory for anyone who participated in it.

After the pictorial history of the Catholic Worker was put on slides, Stanley was invited to universities and groups throughout the United States and Canada to deliver the slide lecture. Stanley's last lecture and slide show was at Maryhouse on Friday, November 2nd, less than two weeks before he died. He had discovered some early photographs of Dorothy Day, one showing her as an infant with three generations of her family. Referring to the work of the volunteers, he joked, "I myself am a volunteer. I haven't made up my mind whether I'll stay or not."

The last issue of the paper to appear in his lifetime contained Stanley's review of Raphael Brown's *True Joy from Assisi*. He expressed his gratitude to the author for a "spiritual guidebook for those of us who will never be able to make the physical trip to Assisi." In the same issue is a reprint of a 1967 article "A Night at an Uncomfortable Inn." After a reminder that St. Teresa of Avila described life in these terms, Stanley gave details of his own experience when he came in from Tivoli to find the house on Chrystie Street filled. Invited to share a tiny apartment with young men volunteering at the Worker, he recounted a night without sleep and shared not only with the volunteers but with squads of cockroaches. "We haven's got a single cockroach," one of the young men living in the apartment told him. "The ones you see are all married with large families."

The wake for Stanley (now referred to as "the viewing of the body"), was held at Funeraria Buen Pastor on Second Street and Second Avenue. It was held on a Friday evening, and the simple funeral home was filled with Stanley's family,

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forget themselves in dogged work. In hearing the elemental call of Islam, we might remember our God and ourselves. We might remember that God's cosmic wisdom, His Word which has created and hallowed the material world, chose to sow earthly soil by taking flesh. A member of Shem's race, a son of Abraham, Jesse's shoot, Jesus spoke in parables of the Kingdom, a word of boundless love, a word somewhere stuck in our throats, as yet unspoken and inactive in this world. Of this secret hidden since the foundation of the universe, both Judaism and Islam speak in fragmentary and varied ways, but finally they cannot swallow it as Christians will. It's too big a truth, stumbling block and scandal, in the face of all those manifest dualisms that battling wits empirically experience between each other, in themselves, and with the Lord of worlds. We, especially Christians, are as yet too small-hearted, too unimaginative, to body-forth into our domestic let alone foreign policies the greatness of the God of Jesus—and so, in history, that God appears rather as victim than as one in charge. The dream sleeps.

So much our adventing Eucharistic rite tells us. For finally in this provisional in-between-time we dwell in, Eucharist is not so different from the Prophet's sense of God's "real presence" in the vein of the neck—that is, unconsciously in the blood, not yet in awakened word and deed. For Christians, too, the meaning of Incarnation is too great.. Largely unwitting, we also swallow, under elements of bread and wine, God's wish to hallow earth and body more than we can fathom. Until we have swallowed the big aborning truth here, not simply in unconscious body and blood, but awakened consciously, our brothers and sisters in this distressed world will not know the Messiah's Kingdom has come—a second time, to fill time. For this coming birth, as St. Paul says, all nature groans.

POETRY EDITORS

For no less than sixteen years, John Fandel has served as poetry editor at *Commonweal*. It is an assignment he has always fulfilled with extraordinary care and attention. The magazine's readers profited from the scrupulous judgment he used in sifting through the many poems submitted here; not a few aspiring poets profited from his acute advice and gentle encouragement. He came and went in our office with the same quiet grace that marked the poems he most liked to publish. It was only a small recognition of the devotion he had for his task that poems published in *Commonweal* were awarded first place in the Catholic Press Association competition for the last two years—in fact, winning two of the first three places each year.

Earlier this year, John proposed to pass the editorship on to others, and with this issue that change takes place. The new editors will be Rosemary Deen and Marie Ponsot, who both teach at Queens College of the City University of New York and have completed a book together on the practice and teaching of writing. Ms. Deen has previously reviewed for *Commonweal*, Ms. Ponsot for *Poetry*. Marie Ponsot has also published a volume, *True Minds*, in the Pocket Poets series and broadcasts a monthly radio review of poetry.

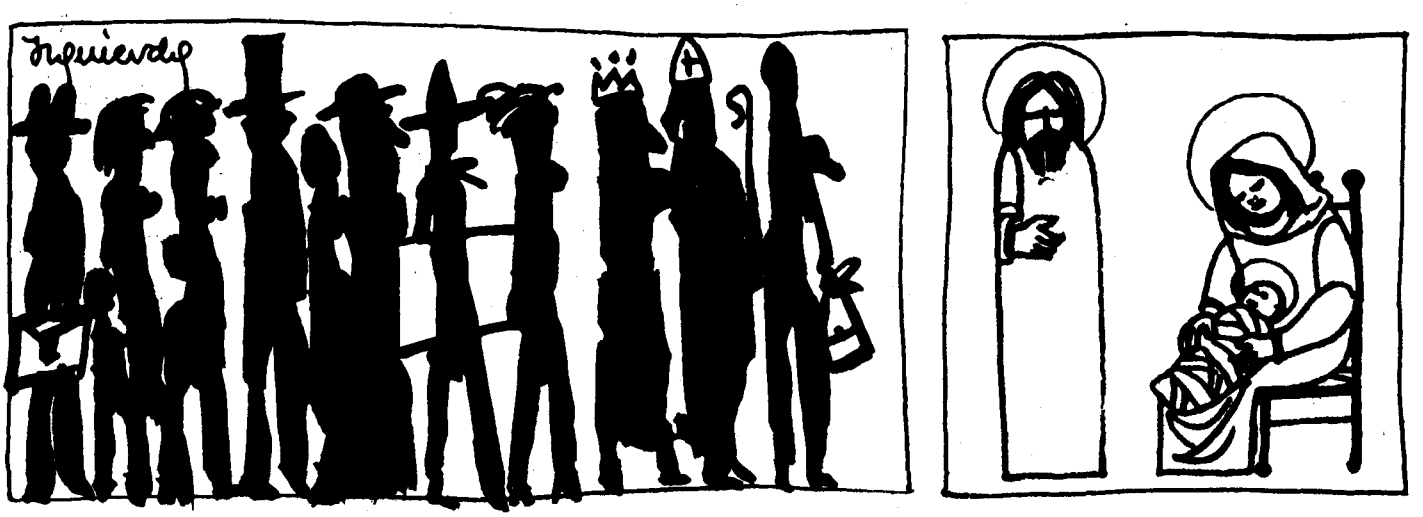
Stanley Vishnewski, R.I.P.

THE FIRST VOLUNTEER

DEATH OF A CATHOLIC WORKER

"MANY CAME and went, but Stanley stayed," said the Rev. Geoffrey Gneuss, O.P. He was giving the homily at the Mass of the Resurrection for Stanley Vishnewski of the Catholic Worker at Nativity Church in New York's lower East Side.

Stanley Vishnewski, who died at Maryhouse, on East Third Street on November 14, 1979, joined Dorothy Day shortly after the founding of the Catholic Worker movement. He was seventeen years old. He stayed on until his death of heart failure at the age of 63. He never married. Over that extended period, volunteers had appeared, served, and gone on to other things, to be replaced in an ever-renewing stream of new blood. Volunteers who joined the movement made no com-



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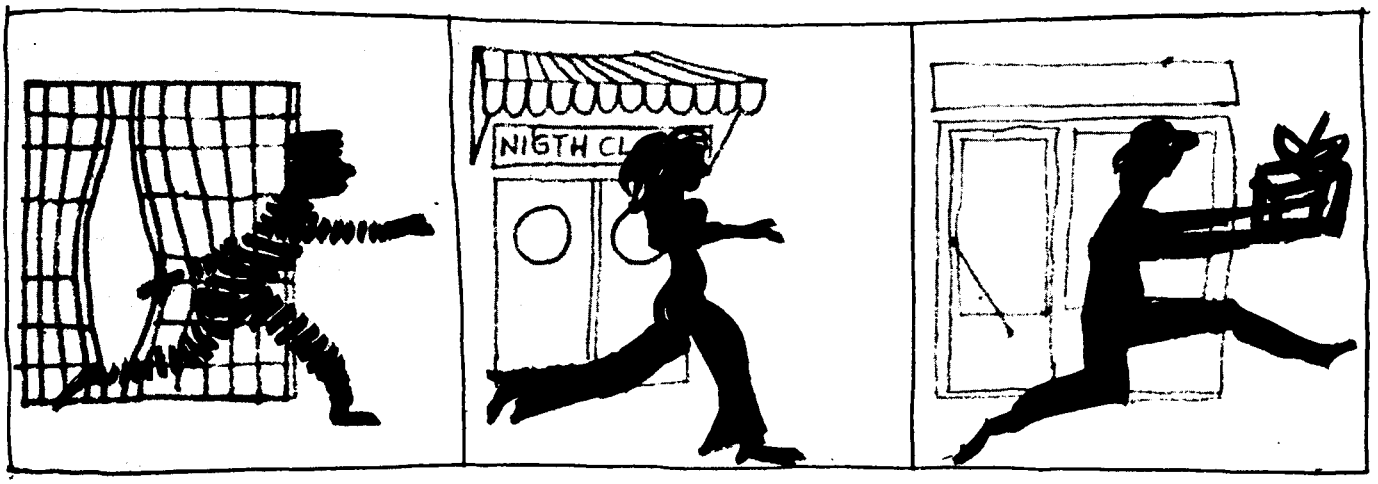

tion. And at this elemental and profound level of soul-talk, there remains an extraordinary opportunity for re-opening the conversation.

Outsiders typically misjudge Allah as a pitiless tyrant playing with submissive adherents without regard for their sacrifice, like pawns on a chessboard. To the insider, however, the Lord of all worlds displays qualities not other than Yahweh—Father of Jews and Christians. As Ameer Ali put it in *The Spirit of Islam* (London: Christophers, 1923, p. 18), Allah is

> . . . the Holy, the Peaceful, the Faithful, the Guardian over His servants, the Shelterer of the orphan, the Guide of the erring, the Deliverer from every affliction, the Friend of the bereaved, the Consoler of the afflicted, in His hand is good, and He is the generous Lord, the Gracious, the Hearer, the Near-at-Hand, the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Very-forgiving, whose love for man is more tender than that of the mother-bird for her young.

As in the desert from which this experience of God is sprung, between the Muslim and Allah stands nothing. *The Koran* (vi, 12) expresses it this way: "Is He not closer than the vein of thy neck? Thou needest not raise thy voice . . ."

Secondly, the created world is no passing illusion unconsciously emanating from the Absolute, as in Indic religion, but is the deliberate act of God's will. As in Judaism and Christianity, matter matters to God as well as ourselves. This theology accounts for that trust, which we share, that the material aspect of life is basically good, something wonderful to be understood and rejoiced in. And it was upon this confidence that Islam, in its earlier history, produced that extraordinary display of mathematical, scientific, and philosophical creativity which was to inform the reawakening consciousness of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The current Iranian wave of anti-intellectualism, if that is what it is, reflects but one strain of Islam, a fundamentalistic resistance to science and technology that is no stranger in our own history; but it does not represent that other, intellectually creative, strain without which the Western Renaissance and seventeenth-century Scientific Revolution are virtually unthinkable. As a consequence, our scientific orientation has little to fear in the long run from a fulsome retrieval of Islamic tradition.

Finally, in the Islamic creed, Allah's supreme accomplishment lies in the creation of human beings and their potential to consciously live and speak His word. No less than the West, Islam proclaims the ultimate value of the individual—again in contrast to Indic and Far Eastern religions for which individuality has no permanent value in the ultimate scheme of things. Upon this religious, rather than merely social, principle is built Islam's fundamentally democratic spirit and its principled stand against the social injustice of the Shah's regime. If American arms and money are now indicted as co-conspirators in the Shah's injustice and callous modernization, we need not appeal for hostage life exclusively in terms of international law. To speak to the Muslim world, we would do better to appeal to the example of the Prophet. To his acute sense of social justice and charity: When asked by a grieving woman what good she might do for her dead mother's soul, Muhammed gets straight to the point: "Water! Dig a well for her, and give water to the thirsty." And to great-souled forgiveness: Persecuted and humiliated for years by licentious and tribally warring Meccan authorities, Muhammed refused revenge when he finally took that city. In triumph, he accepted, in place of the talonic law, his enemies' renunciation of former idolatry and conversion to Allah. This is authentic Islam.

The Ayatollah Khomeini is not Islam's best representative. If we go behind his rhetoric to the great-souled tradition he very likely *mis*represents—as many of our own spiritual and civil leaders have misrepresented us—is it possible we can hear, this Advent-time, a call back to our own authentic spiritual roots?

Behind the passions of the moment, and after they have subsided, Islam's wise tongue appeals to our souls. "God is great! God is great!" cries the muezzin five times daily. Christians may well heed that summons, and recall that until the eighteenth century our European ancestors blessed themselves with one hundred and fifty holidays a year lest they

In keeping with its usual holiday practice, *Commonweal* is skipping one issue during the Christmas-New Year's season. The next issue will be dated Jan. 18, 1980.

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CHRISTMAS, ISLAM AND THE AYATOLLAH

WITH BARELY concealed shock and perhaps contempt, a *New York Times* correspondent in Iran reports a scene of black-shirted young men chanting revolutionary slogans while flagellating themselves to the rhythmic beat of cymbals. A bystander explains that "third world countries must regain their own cultures as the first way of fighting imperialism." He seems to have in mind, not crude economic exploitation by the West, but the more subtle, psychologically disorienting, cultural hegemony that often goes silently with rapid, Western-financed, modernization. Then the bystander ominously mentions all of Africa in this connection, and refers to the need to purge Iran's intellectual elites of those contaminated by Western ideas. Is such speech and chanting the empty clang of religiosity covering the eruption of stone-cold hearts and ungovernable passion? We may well wonder this Christmas eve.

For our attention this Advent season is diverted by events in Iran which seemingly threaten to stop or turn back the clock—to something that at first hearing sounds elemental, primitive, frightening. Ironically, on the eve of the feast of the Word made flesh, language appears to have broken down over an unbridgeable chasm. The Iranian ambassador's empty seat at the United Nations Security Council chamber speaks loudly. Will this fierce revival of purist Islam spread, and if so, how do we understand it? Can we learn to speak its language? Might we even profit from Islam revived?

"Wisdom," an ancient adage goes, "has alighted on three things: the brains of the Franks, the hands of the Chinese, and the tongues of the Arabs." Recall that Jesus, our wisdom, spoke an Aramaic dialect, kin to Muhammed's tongue, and Muslims recognize Jesus as one of their own. His word is theirs also. Does a way out of our linguistic confusion lie here?

According to Pentecostal symbolism, Jesus was born to heal the Babel of tongues which divide this world. The birth of Israel's hope in the flesh is thus understood as an ecumenical event. In honor of his birth, it pays us to look beneath the surface of recent events for some promise of reconciliation—at least in the long run. Taking the clue, therefore, from the Iranian bystander's comment that the current crisis arises at the deepest level out of a soul-sense of cultural violation, we are advised to look deeper than our outrage at the taking of the hostages, deeper than the condemnation we share with Iranians of the Shah's ill-gotten gains and secret police, and deeper still than our similarly shared discomfort with a process of modernization that creates soulless cities like Teheran. For once, the political crisis seems linked to the perilous theological illiteracy of our diplomats and technocrats, and theirs as well. We are urged, then, to uncover a common language at the level of those theological notions of God, creation, and the human which tradition-minded Muslims feel have been trampled, and which they seek to re-animate in a distinctively Islamic constitu-

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two brothers and a sister and nieces and nephews, as well as his Catholic Worker family. Among the present editors were Frank Donovan, Rita Corbin, Peggy Scherer, Dan Mauk, Kathleen Clarkson, Robert Ellsberg and Katherine Temple and among past editors Robert Ludlow, Tom Sullivan, Gerry Griffin, Tom Cornell, Kieran Dugan, Patrick Jordan and former *Chicago Catholic Worker* editor James O'Gara. Tamar Hennessy, Dorothy Day's daughter, always close to Stanley, came with two of her daughters.

The regular Friday evening meeting at Maryhouse that Friday, November 16, was planned as an unusual break in the series of lectures and discussions. It was a piano concert by Douglas Finch and was not called off. Stanley loved music and found joy in it while recovering from a severe heart attack seven years before his death. He would often join Dorothy Day at Maryhouse to listen to broadcasts of concerts and operas. While most of the Catholic Worker family went to the nearby funeral home, a few stayed behind to hear Chopin and Beethoven. After the closing of the funeral home, a stream of people walked back to Maryhouse to find the concert still in progress. They slipped into the auditorium and sat quietly until the playing stopped.

The next morning, the simple gray coffin was carried in procession by Stanley's two families to Nativity Church. Peggy Scherer led the procession carrying an immense Easter candle. The Mass ended with the singing of "Salve Regina," loud and clear as Stanley liked it, "Mother of mercy, Our Queen, we greet you . . . And after our life of exile, show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O gracious, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary."

For those who come after him. Stanley has left a unique record of the Catholic Worker, in articles, in photographs and slides, and in the extended history still to be published. In all of these, he carried the message of the Gospel, of peacemaking, of voluntary poverty, of hospitality and service to the homeless who are "other Christs." But he has left another record, the record of a unique life. EILEEN EGAN

(Eileen Egan, an associate editor of the Catholic Worker *and UN representative of Pax Christi, is currently writing a history of Catholic Relief Services.)*

Of several minds: *Frank Getlein*

HUMANITARIANS AMOK

KISSINGER, ROCKEFELLER, & THE SHAH

I DON'T SUPPOSE David Rockefeller and Henry Kissinger set out to get that Marine corporal killed in Pakistan or the embassy folk terrorized in Teheran. It was just one of those things.

Anyway that's what the two of them have accomplished as of this writing and I hate to think of what they will have run up as of this reading.

In a flacked-up statement issued on his behalf, David Rockefeller reiterated the argument he presumably, or at least for the record, used with the secretary of state and the president of the United States, namely that he was motivated solely by "humanitarian" reasons in demanding that the Georgia Peach and the once and future corporation lawyer admit David's and Henry's great and good friend, the well-known tyrant, torturer and bon vivant, Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlevi, late of the Peacock Throne and now allegedly suffering from some exotic form of alleged cancer for which no known treatment allegedly exists outside New York City.

Rockefeller and Kissinger obviously practice selective humanitarianism. Humanitarianism for the immensely rich and recently powerful, anti-humanitarianism for clerks, typists, diplomats, and Marine corporals. Well, it's one way to look at the world and I guess we all do so one way or another and to some extent. They like their friends more than they like ill-paid people they don't know who may have to sacrifice their lives in the cause of humanitarianism for the rich.

The humanitarian argument is based on two interesting assumptions. The first is that there are no doctors anywhere in the world except New York.

Second, there are no airplanes in or near New York that could be used to fly New York doctors anyplace else. The second assumption contradicts the experience of every American medical convention ever held in Honolulu, Pago-Pago, Athens, Paris, London, Samarkand, and other famed centers of American medical knowledge. Some participants in these feasts of pure reason doubtless make the journey by more exotic means, but your average, Sir Luke Fildes, plain American millionaire sawbones, gets there by air.

Odd, when you think of it, the disappearance of all those medi-planes between Shangri-La and JFK. This mass vanishing could well provide the plot for "Airport '80." We open above the credits. Two great surgeons, specialists in incredibly expensive operations for incredibly rich ex-dictators, rush out the doors of their New York hospital en route to save the Shah in Mexico. They hail a cab. "Take us to Kennedy Airport!" The driver, a Central Casting New York hackie, removes his cigar, rolls up his shaggy dog eyes, and growls, "Whatsamatter, doc? Aincha heard? There ain't no Kennedy airport no more. Don't need it. No planes, no airport. How about Grand Central?" Close up and jump cuts from doc one to doc two: consternation, bafflement, frustration, pecuniary trembling. Music up, titles roll.

To return to the real world, you can believe the humanitarian argument if you want to, but deep in my heart what I believe is that the deciding arguments

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went something like this: Don't screw around with Chase Manhattan, Jack.

It doesn't really matter whether that succinct statement of reality and normal prudence among once and future corporation lawyers was actually spoken or not. It didn't have to be. It was just there and everybody who counted heard it and jumped. Among the ones who heard it and didn't jump were the ones who didn't count, namely the entire staff of Iranian experts at the State Department. What they said was, if you let the Shah in, the embassy will be occupied, the staff held hostage and possibly some of them killed. The experts were ignored, just as other experts were ignored in re China one time. The Shah was admitted, the embassy was occupied and the staff held hostage. The death of Corporal Crowley while covering the retreat of the American staff in the Islamabad embassy was not the direct result of the Rockefeller-Kissinger initiative, but the links are quite legible if you look.

Whether from true *hubris* or simple fatuousness, the Rockefeller-Kissinger-Vance-Carter act of humanitarianism wasn't even done hugger-mugger, as it could easily have been: he goes into medical seclusion in Mexico, arrives at Newark at 3 a.m., is driven to the uniquely equipped and staffed New York hospital in a Chevrolet, registered falsely as a rich rug merchant, swathed in facial bandages, the heavy armed guard is maintained at his Mexican hideaway to chase reporters, and everything is tickety-boo.

But, no, the humanitarians were themselves so infatuated with their royal visitor, they couldn't quite imagine the Iranians not sharing their admiration and affection. They brought him in like Joe Duveen coming up the harbor on the *Berengaria*. When, as predicted by the professionals, the Shi'ites hit the fan, the humanitarians were astounded.

The basic reason for the ensuing stand-off was that both sides were completely correct in the denunciations each issued of the other. Without question, one of the fundamental principles of international relations, not to mention international law, was violated when the Iranian government, insofar as there can be said to be one, not only did nothing to relieve the occupied embassy but gave its blessing, literally, to the occupying force, making it, in effect, a government agent.

Contrariwise, there is no doubt at all that the Shah is everything the Ayatollah says he is: long time and wicked oppressor of the people, big-time looter of his country's wealth, supported in his oppression and his looting by the United States, most notably by Kissinger and Nixon and, in the private sector, by David Rockefeller and your friends at Chase Manhattan. There is no doubt in my mind that the Ayatollah is also correct in saying many of the embassy people are spies. That's one of the points about embassies. "All," however, seems a little overstated.

As President Carter counted his options, he missed the most attractive: an offer to trade Rockefeller and Kissinger for the hostages and thus test the unflaggingness of their love for the Shah.

For the dwindling band of journalists who still believe that Old Nick Machiavelli probably had a better grasp of statecraft than Henry Kissinger—with the single exception of the ancillary art of bamboozling the press—it is easy to see what the Florentine would have advised his Prince:

"We continue efforts to save the hostages. Once we get them back or once the Iranians kill them, we withdraw all Americans from the country, go in big with all force available, hunt down and slaughter everyone connected with the occupation and extortion, hang the Ayatollah and the Shah together in the central square—a two-for-one with guaranteed total coverage—occupy the country, set up a friendly, a very friendly, government and renegotiate the price of oil. So long, OPEC."

Naturally, this is cleared with the Soviets first. They can hardly object in view of our complaisance toward their periodic invasions of their assorted colonies in Eastern Europe. And we clear it with the Saudis, who presumably would be much relieved to be relieved of a neighbor upstaging them as holier than anybody.

If the military replies that this is manifestly impossible, we renegotiate our whole policy of drunken spending on military equipment and personnel useless when you want them.

Machiavelli, of course, worked from reason and psychology uncluttered by the humanitarianism that led Kissinger to the Christmas bombings, the incursion into Cambodia, and many, many similar human rights initiatives.

Meanwhile, on the day that Corporal Crowley laid down his life for his friends our friends at Chase Manhattan ran a double-truck, two full pages, ad in the *New York Times* to present a new scheme to eliminate the "float" we all lived on when young. "The Chase Convenience Package," proclaimed the head and a parenthetical deck, "(Here's what's in it for you.)" They could have saved their money. We were learning that elsewhere in the paper. FRANK GETLEIN

Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

CONTINENTAL LOVERS

THE GOVERNORS OF CALIFORNIA

SOON AFTER you read this it will be at long last election year. It seems that we have been on the way forever. The choosing of a president has become our national spectator sport. (Because it *is* a spectator sport, it seems to invite less and less participation and, therefore, fewer and fewer people vote—but that is another story.) What we see in the press and on television day by day is a sort of racing form appropriate to the process, a result of the relentless daily scrutiny of the ephemera of the political process. Candidates are rated according

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to their handicaps, fitness of mind and body, handling under pressure, backers, standing in the last poll, or showing in the last interview. (Translate "poll" and "interview" as "race and trial" and you have a complete parallel.) Serious issues get little attention and ideas—if the candidates have them—almost none at all. Creativity and long-range approaches to our problems are hard to measure in terms of contest and the space available on the nightly news.

It was probably only boredom with the familiar content of Governor Ronald Reagan's set speeches which induced a few of the commentators and columnists in the major newspapers to spend some time on the so-called *new* material in his announcement speech. In that speech Governor Reagan called for a North American continent—Canada, the United States, and Mexico—which would American continent—Canada, the United States, and Mexico—which would be, he said, the strongest, most self-sustaining group of nations in the world in terms of food, resources, technology and undeveloped territory. "It is time to stop looking at our nearest neighbors as foreigners," he added and promised that, if he were elected president, he would work tirelessly for close ties, would invite representatives of Canada and Mexico to sit in on planning sessions at the highest level. Such an accord would not be dominated by the United States, he insisted. First of all, we would not seek to dominate and secondly, our neighbors would not allow us to do so. The resources of this continent would be used for the common good of all its people. He was realistic about the need for open borders.

Reagan's plan for progress was not much more specific than that; it was clothed in conservative rhetoric intended, no doubt, to reassure his core followers. It was no accident, he said, that these three nations are so strong potentially. All three shared a long-standing heritage of free government. (One might cavil here about one-party rule in Mexico but reassuring rhetoric does not allow for gradations in description.) He painted continental cooperation as a restorative remedy for American strength and confidence. He echoed clarion calls of the past: on the basis of such cooperation we could *"serve notice on friend and foe alike . . .* that we are prepared for the long haul." But it was a forward-looking suggestion for a way out of our problems and raised hopes for the future.

Reagan's proposal bore a skeletal likeness to the concept advanced by Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr., present Governor of California, in a speech to the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco on the 20th of October in 1978. He suggested a common market of the North American nations which could be, he thought, "the most powerful trading group of nations in the world." Governor Brown elaborated on this idea before a Los Angeles press conference on December 12th in 1978. He was just back from the meeting of the Interstate Oil Compact Commission, a commission drawn from the oil-producing states, where he had been elected chairman. He thought that a North American continental common market made great sense for nations with common boundaries. Such a common market for energy, trade and tourism would emphasize the strength and the resources of the northern hemisphere. Once people began thinking in terms of hemisphere they would see their strengths rather than their differences. He was careful to point out that this did not mean or could not mean one nation exploiting another, and, of course, it was useless to talk of a North American common market until the question of Mexico's need for emigration had been dealt with.

Brown also gave his idea some practical testing. After becoming chairman of the interstate commission he invited representatives of Canadian and Mexican national and provincial governments to a meeting to discuss their common problems. Because of the complexities and sensitivities discovered at the meeting he and his advisers began to speak in terms of an economic community of nations for fear that the larger idea might be lost in the thickets of custom unions and trade barriers.

Governor Brown expanded on the idea in his swing through the East in the spring of 1979. He talked about it on "Meet the Press" and "Face the Nation" and *Time* magazine gave it space in its discussion of him as a presidential candidate. Yet, at the time of Governor Reagan's announcement in early November, no one seemed to remember that Brown had made such a suggestion or to see the similarity to Reagan's "new" hemispheric policy. Why? I'm afraid it was because, in the meantime, Senator Kennedy had announced and Governor Brown, for all intents and purposes, was fading from the form sheets—or at least from the forefront of the consciousness of the press. He had fallen off the win or lose charts.

Now I hold no brief for Jerry Brown, or any other candidate. Historically few ideas have been wholly originated by one person. By the time an idea is proposed as a practical solution, it has usually had currency among theorists for some time. But solutions to our national dilemmas are more important to us than the current poll standings of would-be presidents.

Good political ideas have their source in raw need. The prospect for continental cooperation, for example, springs from our need for oil and the pressure on our borders caused by the needs of the people of Mexico. The translation of the answer to that need into responsible public policy and practical program is what politics is about.

One can address the raw need head on and call for continental petroleum sharing as did candidate John Connally—with a hint, it seemed, of "they're got it; we want it, and we will have it." Or, like the California governors one can enlarge on the possibilities and seek for advantages for those whose need is less—in this case, Canada—thus building a true hemispheric policy.

Politicians with a breadth of practical vision are important to a nation in struggle. Campaigns should be their forum. The progress of their ideas should be the stuff of the nightly news. Like Jimmy Durante, Jerry Brown has a million of them and if one can work its way into the Republican front-runner's program, they are ideas to reckon with.

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

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The Catholic Revival revisited

DOLORES ELISE BRIEN

NEARLY FIFTY years have passed since the Catholic Revival was welcomed in this country as the beginning, we hoped, of a vigorous Catholic intellectual and cultural life. Growing up in the forties I discovered Catholic Action in high school and the Catholic Revival in college. Both had been around for more than a decade but penetrated the schools very slowly. Of the two the Catholic Revival had the more decisive influence. As we generally understood the term (which gave way in the fifties to the "lay apostolate") Catholic Action was a call to the laity to organize and become actively involved in the work of the church. The Catholic Revival, however, was a resurgence of Catholic thought and belief brought about by a brilliant crowd of novelists, poets, dramatists, historians, philosophers, biographers and theologians, the like of which we will not see soon again. Without the intellectual and spiritual motivation it supplied, Catholic Action would have lost its urgency and appeal. Without the stimulus of the Revival there would also have been no liturgical and scriptural renewal, little if any change in the thinking and lifestyle of Catholics, lay or religious, and probably, therefore, no Vatican II.

The distinction of having brought the Revival to this country belongs to Maisie Ward and Frank Sheed when, in 1933, they opened up a branch of their publishing house in New York. Over the next years they published most of the major as well as the lesser writers of the Revival, among them, G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, E.I. Watkin, Jacques Maritain, Nicholas Berdyaev, Ronald Knox, Etienne Gilson, Martin d'Arcy, Paul Claudel, Léon Bloy, to mention only a few of the luminaries who come readily to mind. Shining brightly among them were the great figures from the Christian past, the Fathers of the Church, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Catherine of Siena, Cardinal Newman. The Revival was also known, not inappropriately, as the Catholic Renaissance, suggesting the scope and vitality of the period as well as its collective endeavor to create a new synthesis of Christian faith and life, a Christian humanism, rooted in and continuous with the tradition of the church, but responsive to the modern world. Those of us who came under its spell were not unlike Chesterton's English yachtsman who discovered England believing it to be an exotic South Sea island. We were those "who with utmost daring discovered what had been discovered before." Catholicism, in all its splendor, had been there all along, but the Catholic Revival made us see it with new and startled eyes. Growing up as a Catholic and clued into the Revival, then in its heyday, was an exhilarating if often disquieting experience which, for some of us, had profound, personal consequences.

In the Catholic women's college I attended I took a course called "The Catholic Literary Renaissance," taught by a young priest who read poignantly from the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. (Hopkins became something of a cult figure during that time, especially among young priests.) The course was limited to the English Revival and we read fragments of Newman, Francis Thompson, Alice Meynell, Coventry Patmore and of course, Chesterton and Belloc. In a philosophy course I struggled through Pegis's *The Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Grilled rather than taught by three priests, the course was, at best, an arduous mental exercise. What I learned about St. Thomas and Scholasticism I acquired through reading on my own. My real exposure to the Revival came outside the classroom as a spiritual adventure which was both intensely personal and communal.

In the summer following Freshman year I met with a small group every week at Carol Jackson's small flat in Manhattan to discuss one of the Catholic Masterpiece Series then being published by Sheed and Ward and sold at a dollar a copy. We read the Desert Fathers, Newman's *Callista*, and Belloc's *Survivals and New Arrivals*, but it was St. Augustine's *Confessions* which made the deepest impression. I would leave the meetings in a state of acute excitement and anxiety, dimly aware that there was much more to Catholicism than I had suspected. At the end of the summer Carol joined with Ed

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Willock to found *Integrity* and I joined a Catholic Action group.

Our headquarters, a former Chinese laundry, was in St. Augustine's parish in Brooklyn, and since this was a woman's group, the name Monica House seemed inspired. We organized many "apostolic" activities but perhaps none as formative as the weekly "literary" meeting attended by a few college students, working men and women, and a number of priests. We read aloud from Charles Péguy, Léon Bloy, Graham Greene, Gertrude von LeFort, Gerard Manley Hopkins. With each one of us assigned a part, we read T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral, The Cocktail Party* and Claudel's *The Tidings Brought to Mary* and *The Satin Slipper*. I even tried, and failed, to orchestrate for choral speaking passages from Péguy's *Basic Verities*. These gatherings were pervaded by a shared sense of excitement as our perception of Catholicism deepened.

On my own I read randomly and avidly in fiction, history and the lives of the saints, not always fully understanding but absorbing enough to feed my youthful idealism. Temperamentally I was drawn to the French writers, to Mauriac, Bernanos, and especially to Péguy. Raissa Maritain's *We Have Been Friends Together* was a sublime love story. I could understand the young Raissa's "sadness and weariness with life," the "feeling of emptiness as one waited for some great event, some perfect fulfillment." How I reverberated to her eventual union with Jacques Maritain, their search together for Absolute Truth and their desperate decision to die should they not find it. I was then in my early twenties, very close in age to the Maritains when they embraced Catholicism. They were lay people, husband and wife, but they desired to live perfectly in this world. The Maritains dramatized with their lives the fact that Catholicism could not only satisfy the rigorous demands of the intellect but the deepest longings of the soul.

Maisie Ward, perhaps more than anyone, brought to our attention the heroic efforts of the French clergy and laity to revitalize the faith in that country. French thinkers and activists, such as Abbé Godin, Abbé Michonneau, Henri Perrin, Jacques Loew, Yves de Montcheuil, Jean Daniélou, Yves Congar, Henri deLubac, and Cardinal Suhard, had a profound influence on me. That peculiar élan of the French, their emotional intensity, their seriousness, appealed to my religious sensibility in a way the English, with all their charm, wit, common sense and insight, could not.

After college I went to Grailville to be trained for the lay apostolate and put aside the likes of Bloy, Mauriac and Bernanos. Their brand of Catholicism was considered to be too pessimistic, too morbid, to be healthy. I was put in touch with the theologians, liturgists, and spiritual writers of the Revival, with Cardinal Newman (not exactly an optimist), Dom Columba Marmion, Edward Leen, Gerald Vann, Romano Guardini, Léonce de Grandmaison, Dietrich von Hildebrand, among others. Thomas Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain*, published that year, 1948, became a much-read, treasured possession. No other book conveyed so vividly the kind of spiritual unrest which many people, like myself, were going through at that time. To live the faith, I discovered, meant centering each day in the teachings of the church, in the sacrifice of the Mass, in prayer and worship, and in participating in the church's mission of salvation to the world. The Catholicism which opened up to us was one of beauty, drama, sacrifice. The more one learned about the church, the more one had to love her and give oneself to her.

LOOKING BACK upon those days, thirty years or more ago, what were the overriding ideas, which were so compelling it would take me years to free myself from their tenacious hold on me? Certainly nothing was as important or as powerful as the vision of the church transcendent, the church which was more than a human institution. Everything else took meaning from that perception. The church was not the pope, the bishops, or the clergy. We reminded ourselves of this when we sat bored through dull sermons and took comfort in it when disappointed at the narrowmindedness of church policies and the failure of the church to practice what she preached. The real church was invisible, the real church was the Mystical Body of Christ, the Communion of Saints, the Bride of Christ. More mysterious and splendid still was the vision of the church as Christ, incarnated. The church, as Guardini had observed, "was becoming a living reality, and we understand that she truly is the One and the All."

Catholicism was a total way of life, embracing every aspect of human experience or endeavor. There was nothing on earth or in heaven with which it was not concerned. We always knew there was a Catholic answer to everything, but there was much more to it than that. Every human institution, be it philosophy, poetry, or politics, the arts or sciences, education or entertainment, family or society, fulfilled its true purpose only insofar as it was compatible with and guided by Catholic teaching. To understand Catholicism in this way, as a complete system of life and thought, was reassuring, particularly at a time when western civilization seemed doomed. The writers of the Revival presented us with a church which alone could offer us wholeness, sanity as well as sanctity, an integrating principle in an otherwise disintegrating society.

To see the church in this way made the church/world polarity inevitable. The greatest minds of the period, Maritain, Berdyaev, Watkins, Dawson,and Guardini, dramatized the decline of western civilization once it had abandoned, beginning with the Renaissance and then with the Reformation, its centuries-old link with the church. In the ascendancy were the twin evils, materialism and secularism, which were anti-human as well as anti-Christ, and embodied in their most threatening form in Communism. To turn things around again, if it were not too late, required a radical renewal of Catholic life and the acceptance of Catholicism as the only true system of belief which could save the world.

This was a very large order, but to a young and fervent Catholic it was seen as a "call" and not impossible with God's grace. My involvement with Catholic Action and my immersion in the writing of the Revival during college had left me with a deep malaise. I was very critical of the world-out-there

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and did not see how I could fit into it. The only alternative was to turn from the mainstream, to devote myself completely to the church.

What mattered, however, was not so much what one did, as what one was. That was, of course, to be a saint. Personal sanctity was the secret of the apostolate, the power which would convert the world. The miracle would happen if only we were holy enough. "There is only one unhappiness, not to be one of the saints," we were fond of quoting from Léon Bloy's *The Woman Who Was Poor*. The most widely discussed novels and plays had sanctity for their theme, Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*, Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, Georges Bernanos's *Diary of a Country Priest*, Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. The anguished cry of Péguy's Jeanne d'Arc had particular meaning for those of us in the Grail. "What we need, Lord, what we finally need is a woman who would also be a saint . . . and who would succeed."

A new hagiography flourished, breaking the plaster mold in which all the saints seemed to have been cast. We were given, instead, holy men and women who had started out in life not much different from the rest of us, sometimes even wicked, or worse, mediocre. But through God's grace they abandoned their selfish ways and gave themselves to God in perfect love. St. Francis of Assisi remained the most popular saint, but lesser known saints began to be celebrated especially as the Daily Missal, with its saint for each day, became more widely used. Even St. Thérèse of Lisieux was rescued from the sickening bourgeois piety she seemed to exemplify. We did not lack role models.

Although I was oblivious to the implications then (consciousness-raising was still well in the future) it is striking how often the Revival writers chose as instruments of redemption, the young woman, a suffering and sacrificial victim. Think of Bloy's Clothilde who dies "happy" and in utter destitution, Claudel's Violaine who becomes a leper, is abandoned and murdered, Bernanos's Chantal who is also brutally murdered, Eliot's Celia Coplestone, who is martyred on some remote island, Péguy's Jeanne d'Arc who declares she will cast herself into hell if that is necessary to save souls. The fictional treatment of this theme was supported by much of the spiritual writing of the time, notably by Gertrude von leFort's books, especially her *Eternal Woman* and Caryll Houselander's *The Reed of God*. This "spirituality" called for a surrender of the self to God to be used by Him as He wishes. It was enormously appealing, especially to women, reinforcing in them what they had been told was "natural" to them anyway, to give themselves totally in love and surrender.

Today, some thirty or more years later, my feeling toward that period is ambivalent. Ironically, what made a commitment to the church so necessary then eventually became a reason to distance myself from the church. That the church transcendent proved to be all too human one could certainly live with. But the church's claim to be "the One and the All" I found myself increasingly questioning. The church/world polarity became untenable as I found myself seeking "an original relation with the universe," not a mediated one. I wanted to know the world for and of itself. And finally, I realized that it was no longer possible to deny the self for the sake of sainthood.

Little by little, I am rereading all those books which I read so eagerly long ago and cherished, trying to understand what it was that persuaded me of their truth and what, if anything, can be salvaged. I am aware that I was very young, an adolescent, when exposed to the ideas of the Revival and had lived all my life in a totally Catholic environment, a product of the Catholic ghetto. I wonder, but will never know, what the outcome would have been had I been an adult at the time, with an adult role and responsibilities in society. I do know that the Catholic Revival which was so remarkably rich, so provocative, and so effective an agent for change, merits a revival of its own.

FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Bostonians & Kennedys: romance, roots, & leadership

DENNIS HALE

THE PAST few months have been busy and difficult times in Boston. The rhetoric of city elections, the romance of the once and future Kennedys, and the bitter invective of race war have combined to produce a curious and heady brew. Now the mayoral campaign is over, the Kennedy campaign is officially underway, and the race war has once again settled into a state of siege. This may be a good moment to reflect on what has happened to the city, and to speculate on its future. A warning to the reader, however. There is nothing very hopeful to be said here. The city is now in a relative state of calm—but it has been calm before, encouraging rash predictions and false hopes. Last spring, Rep. Barney Frank, a liberal Democrat who represents the Back Bay in the state legislature, told an audience at Boston College that the "politics of race" was done for in the city. Last month Frank confessed that he, and

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many like him, had been taken by surprise when race violence erupted all over again.

The latest optimistic predictions stem from two sources: Kevin White's re-election to a fourth consecutive term as Mayor, a victory in which, for the first time, he won majorities in both black Roxbury and white South Boston; and Ted Kennedy's long-awaited presidential campaign. White's victory has been picked apart for signs of racial healing, and the prospect of another Kennedy administration seems to offer the hope of a better "urban policy" than the one offered by President Carter. But these are doubtful hopes. The Mayor's victory was built, as successful Boston campaigns frequently are, on an alarmingly constricted electoral base. In Roxbury, he won the votes of less than one-third of the eligible electorate; in South Boston he was supported by less than half the eligible voters. The rest of the voters either voted for his opponent, Joseph Timilty, or stayed home. That was the case throughout the city, with staying home the favored response by far.

Those who did vote for the Mayor were heavily influenced by the network of personal and neighborhood favors—potholes filled and nephews put on the city payroll—that for a long time has been the alpha and omega of city politics. It is not likely that out of such motivations there could emerge a commitment to racial harmony or even to racial tolerance: favors, after all, are a scarce resource, one more reward to be fought over by neighbors.

This latest time of trouble is not without its consolations, however, for those who would study its lessons. Boston's essential problem is becoming clearer, if we can only look through the fog of romance and recrimination that obscures it.

Boston has always nurtured romantic conceits. Holmes saw the State House dome as the "hub of the universe," and Hawthorne wove a magnificent romance from a few shreds of cloth found in an attic. H. P. Lovecraft dreamed of the dark, nasty things that might live under the ancient streets of the North End and George V. Higgins has evoked an entire criminal class from scattered conversations in courtrooms and interrogation cells.

Nor is recrimination a newcomer to the city. Henry Adams described Boston politics as "the systematic organization of hatreds, as harsh as the New England climate." The conflict between Yankee and immigrant has provided its own stock of legends, and its own romance (*The Last Hurrah*). For many years now the hatreds have been both racial and social: friction between white and black, uppers and lowers, "gentry" and blue-collar, town and gown. No crime is too random to have political overtones. A white Harvard student gets into an argument with a black pimp in the Combat Zone, and dies of stab wounds: the crime is picked apart for its complex symbolism. A black student looks " the wrong way" at a white student, and within minutes an entire school is shut down. A young white woman is burned to death by unknown assailants in a black neighborhood. Young toughs in Charlestown talk about getting the "liberals," meaning those responsible for "gentrification" of a white, working-class neighborhood. And so it goes: every boundary seems permeable, every temper at the edge of its endurance.

Meanwhile the romance continues, and has received a considerable boost from the prospect of another Kennedy-for-president. The Kennedy romance was in full bloom in October, with the dedication of the JFK Library at Columbia Point, a grim oceanside neighborhood which also houses the University of Massachusetts and the Columbia Point Housing Project. The Library was built on Columbia Point after being driven from the tonier precincts of Harvard Square, and many have noted the incongruity of its presence there. Contrasted to the shabby U-Mass Campus and the squalor of the projects (described by HUD as "the worst in the country"), the opulence of the Library is obscene. Perhaps no reputation other than the Kennedys' could survive such a pointed reminder of private indulgence and public neglect. There is a double-edged lesson here, one that reaffirms the failure of public investment in the city, while at the same time confirming the judgment that the Kennedys are in some way "special" and subject to laws much different from those which constrain other politicians.

THE CONTRAST between the Library and its neighbors was only the more obvious of the lessons taught this fall. The more intriguing lesson has to do with the subject of political elites, how they have changed in recent decades, what they can and cannot accomplish under the conditions of modern politics, and what their role is in troubled communities such as Boston.

The Kennedy family's relationship to Boston has been ambivalent ever since Joe Kennedy, Sr. pulled up stakes and moved to New York in 1926. In the less constrained atmosphere of Manhattan, the senior Kennedy found an outlet for his ambitions denied him by the elite that governed Boston business. From that time on, the Kennedy's were more at home in New York City, Palm Beach, and Hyannisport than in Boston itself, and there was a great irony in the charge of carpetbagging made against Robert Kennedy when he ran for the Senate from New York. The real carpetbagger was Jack, who was elected to Congress in 1946 from a district in which he had lived only as a student at Harvard.

The Kennedy entourage tried to renew its connection to Boston on the occasion of the Library's opening, perhaps making the best of an arrangement that must not have pleased them very much. President Kennedy wanted his library built in Harvard Square, and he often talked about teaching at Harvard when he retired from the White House. Columbia Point, unlike Harvard, has no certain place in the Kennedy romance. Farther back, of course, there are memories of an earlier Boston connection, to the immigrant city of John Fitzgerald and Patrick Kennedy, of the North End and East Boston. But even these associations do not easily accommodate Columbia Point. The North End was the "old poverty." Columbia Point is the "new poverty." East Boston was a neighborhood of immigrants, ward heelers, and men on the make. Columbia Point is a prison of welfare dependency and second-class citizenship.

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Between the two neighborhoods, the old and the new, stands a century of decline.

It would be captious to blame the Kennedys for that decline. Nevertheless, the Kennedy family is precisely the kind of political elite that would once have provided the city with a talented group of leaders. The phenomenon is not unknown to Boston. The nineteenth century saw four Quincys in City Hall, and the two candidates for Mayor this year—Kevin White and Joseph Timilty—are descended from men active in Boston politics before the turn of the century. Joseph Kennedy, Sr., might have had a long career in Boston politics, had he been so inclined. But it is impossible to imagine Pat Kennedy's son following in his father's footsteps. Joe Kennedy sought a much faster track. In the twentieth century, the world of local politics has offered little to such men.

The Kennedy clan has been called a "national" elite, but they are national almost by default. It might be better to call them a "homeless" elite, with no certain roots in any particular place. Much like the homeless baseball team in Philip Roth's *The Great American Novel*, the Kennedy clan is "liberated" at great cost to itself: set *free from* obligations to a particular place, tradition, or constituency, it is also denied the strength that dependence and rootedness confer on politicians. It is free to wander at will through the precincts of American politics, seeking fans wherever it can find them, but never coming home.

There was, therefore, a poignancy to the Kennedys' latest attempt to come home to Boston. It is significant that so many of the speeches at the dedication emphasized Jack Kennedy's love of the sea. With (unconscious?) insight, architect I. M. Pei faced the library toward the ocean, its back toward the Boston of Kennedy's grandfathers. Even when coming home, it seems, the Kennedys feel the tug of distant horizons, the ceaseless urge to move on.

There was poignancy, too, in the attempt by the Library's directors to turn the dedication into an educational experience for the students in Boston and suburban public schools. As fate would have it, the best and the brightest from the Kennedy administration arrived in the city at the height of its renewed racial turmoil. The week before, a black high school athlete had been shot on a football field in Charlestown. (He is still in the hospital, paralyzed from the neck down.) Earlier, a bus carrying black students into South Boston had been stoned by whites. With an awful predictability, the violence escalated and spread. A white teacher was beaten by black students in Roxbury. A black couple was chased by a mob of whites across Boston Common, almost to the steps of the State House on Beacon Hill. The Mayor, on the advice of the police chief, closed City Hall to public meetings. Under the glare of television lights, crowds of white students milled back and forth through the downtown streets, looking for a target. Black and white students staged walkouts and boycotts during the school day. There were stabbings, beatings, and fist fights. So when the Schlesingers and Salingers and their kindred arrived in the schools to talk about Jack Kennedy's accomplishments, they were faced with a city on the edge of civil war.

THE THEME of the educational program was to have been "public service," reflected in the career of JFK. What many of the speakers discovered, however, was an audience eager to talk about the problems at hand: busing, race conflict, violence, inadequate education. Many were forced to depart from their prepared text and reach into their stock of homilies. Andrew Young, at Jamaica Plain High, told edgy students that "if we are going to solve our problems people will have to learn to understand each other . . . when you don't like someone, work hard at understanding them." Charles Evers, Mayor of Fayette, Miss., tried to deflect what he detected as resentment against Jews among the blacks in his audience. "Jews were the only white people we ever had." Pat Brown, former Governor of California, told Lynn high school students that "we all come from one Maker . . . the best way to get to know people is to go to school with them." Joseph Califano, in suburban Medford, blamed opposition to desegregation on the worsening economic situation.

Most speakers, however, avoided the public service theme *and* Boston's troubles, and took the opportunity to reminisce. John Kenneth Galbraith told Wellesley High students of his love for John F. Kennedy. Pierre Salinger recalled the painful moment when he learned of the president's death. George McGovern opined that during the Kennedy administration (which he served as director of the Food for Peace Program) "there was never a time when you felt like apologizing for this country or its leadership." Others quite frankly looked forward to another chance at public service under Ted Kennedy. In Brookline, Arthur Schlesinger accused President Carter of lacking a "sense of history," and went on to give a campaign speech ("The time has come for us to throw off the fatigue and myopia of the seventies . . ." and so on). Former Kennedy speechwriter Richard Goodwin told his audience, with delicate subtlety, that "the one who can get us moving again is the leader we need." He refused to say who he thought that "one" might be. The word "Camelot" came up quite a number of times. (Could this be the "historical sense" Prof. Schlesinger is looking for?)

All in all, the appearance of so many figures from the New Frontier was an extraordinary manifestation. Here was a vibrant political elite, crystallizing, as it were, out of thin air. Incongruity was everywhere. Averell Harriman in a Somerville High School jacket. Pierre Salinger, lately of Paris, being nostalgic in Natick. Bundy and McNamara talking to students again, without being hooted and jeered at. But the deeper incongruity lay in the simple fact that here was a group of

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people who were venturing, some for the first time in years, to the wrong side of the tracks to dispense advice to students who knew them, if at all, only as figures in a history book. So empty of leadership has Boston been—and Boston is not alone—that the glitter of the Kennedy administration seemed almost too bright in these surroundings, much like the Library itself. It seemed an alien presence, an aristocracy on the wing, its eyes already turned toward the sea, to the chance of yet another rendezvous with destiny, yet another sojourn in Camelot.

WHATEVER the outcome of the next presidential election, there seems to be little hope of any significant change in the conditions of life in Boston. Ted Kennedy may very well have a better "urban policy" than President Carter, but we have had a lot of "urban policies" in the past twenty-five years, and—while many of those policies were good and useful—the basic conditions of urban life seem relatively untouched. As a result, many thoughtful people have become discouraged, concluding that you "can't solve problems by throwing money at them."

The reason for all of this is quite plain. What we have is not an urban problem at all, but a local government problem. Seeing Boston's troubles as stemming from a failure of local government shifts our attention from what is tangential to what is essential. Poverty, for example, is not a uniquely urban problem. The poor are everywhere; they are more visible in cities because they are concentrated in visible neighborhoods, and not dispersed throughout rural counties or tucked away in mountain hollows. Race conflict, also, is only marginally a city problem. It exists everywhere in America, and not just in big cities. Violence, physical decay, drug addiction, juvenile crime, unemployment: these and many other problems associated with cities are widespread in the United States, and can be found in abundance in the nation's suburbs and small towns.

So what, if anything, is special about cities? To make a long story short (and this involves some exaggeration) cities are special because they are ungoverned. Not *ungovernable*, as some suppose; simply ungoverned.

Now, to be sure, Boston has a thing which is conventionally described as a government. There is a City Hall—an impressive one, at that. There are agencies, commissions, departments, and authorities. All the trappings of government, all maintained at great expense, all involving some degree of pomp and ceremony. Boston also has elections, to which a few people pay attention if they have nothing more pressing to do. But does all of this add up to a government? "If you build a wall around the Peloponnese," asked Aristotle, "would that make it a city?"

The romance of Boston is that it is a fiercely political city. Nothing could be further from the truth. Roughly three of five eligible voters take no regular part in city elections. Recently, a *Boston Globe* columnist argued that racial strife proved how deeply "politicized" the city's life had become. But racial violence is a rejection of politics, by a population that for many years has been estranged from the city's political institutions. What Boston needs is more politics, not less.

THE RESTORATION of Boston's politics might begin by tapping the romance itself. Boston's rich political past—the source of its romance—is a thing its citizens cherish with an almost paternal affection. Students who were toddlers when President Kennedy was assassinated can tell stories about James Michael Curley and other legendary figures from the past. Bostonians are not indifferent to politics, certainly—and here is the source of a paradox. Boston's past is richer by far than that of most American cities, but its present is poorer by an almost equal measure. Behind the romance of ward heelers and folk heroes, behind the slogans touting Boston as America's most "livable" city, lies the grim reality of racial murders, absymal schools, decrepit public housing, unemployment, and life on the dole.

If Bostonians have a "feel" for politics—and there are many reasons for thinking that they do—then what they lack is an arena in which to exercise their talents. What they lack, in short, is a government. The public institutions that constitute the city's nominal government are extremely weak. Those that have not yet collapsed seem ready to do so at any moment. The school system has already been under virtual federal receivership (literally in the case of South Boston High), and now it is experiencing a state of martial law. The city jail was ordered closed by a federal court. The Boston Housing Authority has also been put under federal receivership, and is awaiting its new directors. The Metropolitan Boston Transit Authority, not under the city's control, is nearing fiscal disaster: its future apparently holds the fatal combination of service cuts and fare increases that has already done in the New York transit system. The city's legislative bodies—the City Council and School Committee—are held in contempt not only by scholars and journalists, but by ordinary citizens and even some of the legislators themselves. The voters respond to all of these things by shrugging their shoulders and turning their backs on government entirely. Aside from the liberals (of whom there are very few in the city) the main reason for voting in a Boston city election seems to be the hope of either hanging onto or acquiring a city job. For everyone else—especially those who need government the most—elections are meaningless because the government is meaningless. Not just the current administration, but the government itself.

There are important structural reasons for the weakness of local government in Boston. The Major is elected on a nonpartisan ballot. The City Council and School Committee, also nonpartisan, are elected at-large, rather than by district. (Boston has twenty-two wards, the historic units of the city's political life, from which councilors and committee members were elected until a charter change in 1951. That charter returned the city to the system that had been tried first in 1909, and modified in the late 1920s. Despite their irrelevance for all purposes except tabulating the vote, Boston's wards are still important to many citizens, many of whom know their ward number the way they know the name of their neighborhood.)

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Nonpartisan, at-large elections were two of the major goals of the municipal reform movement that loomed so large in American politics during the Progressive Era. Election studies, however, have shown repeatedly, over a thirty-year period, that these "reforms" have serious unintended consequences. They depress voter turnout by reducing the stake of party organizations in the outcome of an election: the party, after all, is the only organization that, year in and year out, has an interest in getting voters to the polls. By removing party labels, these reforms also make it harder for voters to identify candidates. In the vacuum left by the party label, other means of identification become more important. Is the candidate's name first on the ballot? (A proven vote-getter in nonpartisan elections.) Was the candidate's name in the newspaper yesterday? (No matter that he made a speech calling for the liberation of Albania.) Is the name recognizably ethnic? (The first black elected to the School Committee since the early 1960s was named John O'Bryant.)

At-large elections add to the confusion. Since a candidate does not represent a specific place, he is free to roam the city, making promises at will. Under those circumstances, it is difficult to hold him to any of his promises. The goal in Boston is to get into the top nine in a field that usually has eighteen or more candidates. The trick is to find an interest group (the Police Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, the firefighters union, the teacher's union, or the owners of liquor licenses) with members throughout the city. In a low turnout, that will usually insure a spot somewhere in the top nine. (In this year's election to the council, all but one of the incumbents were re-elected.)

The result is a Council that represents interests rather than constituents. Since the interests represented are a small fraction of the total citizenry, that explains much of the voter's estrangement from the city's legislative body. Moreover, only the most heavily populated parts of the city ever elect members to the Council. Nearly half the city's population (including its minority neighborhoods) has been unrepresented on both Council and School Committee since the charter change in 1951.

IN ADDITION to these electoral mechanisms, there is the practice of detaching important parts of the city's responsibilities and giving them to independent authorities. This is done to take certain functions "out of politics," but the result is simply to remove them from the domain of popular government and give them to bureaucrats. The Housing Authority, the Port Authority, the Transit Authority—these and other functions of local government are no longer functions of local *government*, but of local (non-elected) administrative agencies.

What the city has been left with are the governmental functions nobody else coveted. The city is still responsible for public safety and fighting fires, for cleaning up litter and regulating parking lots. It sends out tax bills, assesses the value of property, and tries to keep the traffic moving on city streets. It manages the upkeep of public property. It runs a school system, in the space left to it by the state education authorities and the federal court. It is responsible for public health.

With the exception of schools, these are mostly custodial responsibilities. The political dimension of local government has been swept away. This would not be problematic if the political dimension of local *life* could be swept away with it, but unfortunately it cannot. The city loses its political institutions, but not the problems that political institutions alone can resolve. When those problems reach a critical mass, the weakness of the city's political authorities is exposed for all to see.

This sort of weak, custodial city government was one of the great goals of the Progressive movement, but its roots are even older. The framers of the Constitution expected that a vigorous national government, one that busied itself with great national projects, would completely overshadow the petty, parochial concerns of local political elites. These local elites were identified by Hamilton and Madison as sources of chronic instability in American life; they would take second place now to a national elite, membership in which would be the dream of the most talented and thoughtful citizens of every state and community.

Later in our history, local elites (political machines, for example) were identified as a source of corruption. So for nearly the entire span of our existence as a constitutional republic, local government has been the constant recipient of abuse, legal harassment, and contempt. It is no wonder, then, that local politics has seemed for so many ambitious citizens a second-best career, or a dead-end. No wonder that the governments left behind by two centuries of "reform" have been too weak to capture the loyalty or commitment of their citizens.

In practical terms, what we have done is erode those local institutions through which local elites grow, come to power, learn how to use power responsibly, and exercise their influence. The main institution in question here is the political party. The weakening of the national party structure was preceded by the destruction of local political parties. The destruction of the political party removed from the local scene the only institution we have ever devised for making democratic politics work effectively over a long span of time. The political party performed a number of functions of great importance. It mobilized low-status and low-income voters (a majority in many cities). It was a bridge between local political elites and the citizens they sought to lead. It provided access and entry from below. It created a renewable bond between voters and office-holders, giving the former a way of holding the latter responsible. It was an institution for co-opting the ambitious and teaching them the ways of politics and a sensitivity to local culture. In its history and its traditions was a resource of loyalty that leaders could call upon in moments of crisis. Perhaps most importantly, the party was a way of bringing together leaders from the several parts of the city and nurturing in them a sense of what the city had in common.

Consider, for example, the differences that divide the citizens of Boston. They are many: differences of culture (middle-class liberal vs. blue-collar traditionalist); of ethnicity

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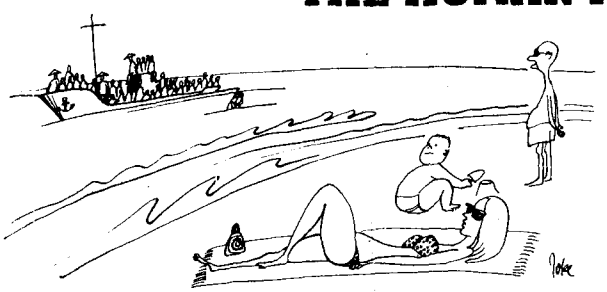
(Irish, Italian, and Yankee); of race (white, black, Hispanic); of economic class (Boston runs the entire spectrum, from indigence to inherited wealth). These differences are obvious. What is usually forgotten, however, is what Bostonians have in common. Most of them are Democrats. It would be nice if there were a way of taking advantage of this fact, at least as a way of beginning the reconstruction of the city's political order. The politics of race began to dominate the city when the tradition of white and black working-class voters supporting the same local candidates came to an end. That tradition owed much to the character and policies of James Michael Curley, who dominated Boston politics for half a century. It was revived, briefly, in Kevin White's first campaign for Mayor. It has proved elusive since, at least in *local* contests. In national contests, it is still a viable tradition, and in 1972 (to use just one example) it passed a genuine miracle: working-class ethnic Boston, middle-class liberals, and blacks all united behind the candidacy of George McGovern. Not enthusiastically, to be sure: but united, nonetheless.

Local politics could sorely use such miracles. Which brings us, at last, full circle. The framers of the Constitution, hostile as they were to purely local political elites, did not contemplate abolishing them entirely, but only casting them in the shadow of a more awesome national government. They had a deep appreciation of the value local political leaders had to offer: stability, continuity, sensitivity to local needs, and so forth. They would not have been pleased to see a purely national elite (such as the Kennedy entourage) parachute into Boston to offer advice on purely local problems, only to be airlifted out the following morning. America was to be governed by a partnership reaching from the smallest city hall, up through the state governments and into the national administration.

The events in Boston reaffirm that wisdom, and teach a final lesson. Alexis de Tocqueville, noting the importance of local institutions to the growth and survival of American democracy, predicted "strange vicissitudes" for a democratic republic that lost the habit and manners of local government. Tocqueville's prophecy has come true. Having lost the habits and manners of *local* government, citizens next lose their ability to participate in (or even comprehend) national politics. National government finds it increasingly difficult to communicate with citizens over the vast distance between Washington and the local community, and also difficult to persuade citizens to communicate with one another. It becomes isolated and defensive, vulnerable to carefully orchestrated pressures and the advice of experts on image-projection.

The restoration of local government, then—and that means bringing politics back to local government—will help restore national government as well. The feuds among citizens cannot be stilled until we can still the feuds among neighbors. The estrangement of Americans from their national government will not end until Americans once again feel loyal to the governments that are closest to them. The country cannot be rebuilt from the top down, but only from the bottom up. That program—and not another Camelot—is what will really get this country moving again.

THE HUMAN REALITY BEHIND THE STATISTICS



The boat people on our shores

PETER KOVLER

CHO IS A WAITER in a Washington hotel-restaurant. I watch as he bustles furiously from kitchen to table to bar to cashier and then around again. He has a moment to shake my hand but then he is off, saddled with the additional assignment of delivering room service in the hotel.

Cho looks like a human pinball. Still, he works this pace daily from 3:00 P.M. to 12:30 A.M. He could have stayed with his earlier job as a "cleaning room boy" at the Arlington, Virginia, Hyatt House but the twenty-seven-year-old refugee needs the additional money. That way his wife and child can have a little extra firewood or another cup of tea: They are still in an island refugee camp in the South China Sea.

I think often about that evening on the job with Cho because I increasingly hear that the boat people are lazy freeloaders. A typical remark comes from a middle-aged white gardener in Kansas City: "Those people just sit and they don't work and the government gives 'em money. I've read that they eat dogs and cats. I don't know how they do it but they've all got new cars. Not like the colored with their Cadillacs, mind you. These people've got new Fords and Chevys. But I will say they're dangerous with their jujitsu and their knives. I won't mess with them."

In a more subtle and sophisticated way, legislators and various interest groups in Washington try to stop the Indochinese. For slyness, an award could go to Sen. Walter Huddleston of Kentucky who, according to an aide, "does not

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object to the Indochinese but objects to the lack of a rational approach to the entire question." Such an objection has made Huddleston the enemy of more than one pro-immigration group in Washington.

Another "rational group" are the Zero Population Growth advocates who say that they have nothing personal against the Indochinese but that the number of legal refugees should be reduced. Moving to the left on the political spectrum are some blacks who believe that the Vietnamese should not be given so much while "blacks in this country" are denied "basic human rights."

As I think of Cho and of my "rational" fellow citizens, I begin to believe that we have fallen into some kind of time warp, somehow back in the late nineteenth century when the entrance of Jews and Catholics was opposed. The fact is that the boat people must be allowed in because otherwise they will drown or rot in refugee camps, but beyond that, the facts also do not support the fears of our latest Know-Nothings. Considering, first, those refugees who have come from Vietnam since 1975, their employment rates are already the same as those in the rest of the United States. Furthermore, those who have been here more than two years are mostly self-supporting. At a center for the study of Immigration at the University of Maryland, a recent report said that "only 10 to 11 percent are totally dependent on the U.S. Government." Moreover, "fully 94 percent of those who sought jobs are employed."

Bronzed and muscular, Cho was undoubtedly strikingly handsome in his South Vietnamese uniform. He now lives with his two brothers in the Washington suburb of Fairfax, Virginia. If I hadn't known anything about their past or present, I would vouch that the three young men in this small apartment were living the happy-go-lucky lives of fraternity brothers or sailors on leave. The stereo tape deck is blasting the number one disco song "You Can Ring My Bell." The living room is a shambles with a guitar on the couch, guitar case wide open on the floor, blankets strewn about, newspapers and magazines lying in disorder on a coffee table, and a shelf with dozens of miniature whiskey bottles. The only object which looks out of place is a copy of the Declaration of Independence hanging on the wall.

Of the three brothers, Cho is undoubtedly the most Americanized. Nam, 21, and Ha, 20, have come here only four months ago from the infamous Malaysian refugee camp, Pulau Bidong. Cho escaped from Vietnam in October of 1976, four months before his only daughter, whom he has still not touched, was born. "I left," he explained, "because the government wanted to 'recruit' me for irrigation projects, digging ditches and watering the fields. They tried to coerce me into being part of their labor force."

He initially arrived in San Francisco—the new Ellis Island—with the clothes on his back, a small suitcase with a dress shirt and pants that friends had given him, and $26. His first impression of the United States was its wealth. "Your country is so rich," he says, "you may not know how rich it is."

Washington, however, became his "final" destination. He has held three jobs since arrival, the first at a hotel where he did general cleaning, fixing the beds and the like, the second at the Arlington Hyatt House where he was once voted Employee of the Month. His reward was a $25 free dinner, excluding drinks, at the Hyatt restaurant. With his usual asceticism, six months later Cho has still not had his dinner.

On workdays Cho's brothers are already asleep when he returns home and are off to work by the time he gets up. The twenty-one-year-old Ha, tall for a Vietnamese at 5'8" (he even played semipro basketball in Vietnam), is off by 7:30 to his "survival" hotel job. And twenty-year-old Nam, a cook's helper at a Chinese restaurant, works six days per week and is gone by 9:00. With the exception of Sunday, they have little family life in the United States.

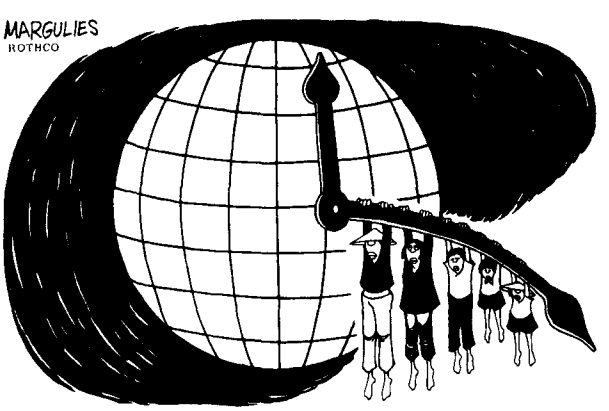
Yet family life is continuously on their minds. The brothers are all worried about their two remaining brothers who are drifting in Saigon. They are also concerned about their mother and 25-year-old sister who are isolated in My Tho Province in the south: they had tried to escape but the boat owner and the crew were arrested.

In Cho's bedroom there hangs on the wall a portrait of his wife, a gift from a friend who drew it from a photograph. She is in her wedding gown. Next to it is a poster which says, "LOVE MAKES EVERYTHING POSSIBLE." Doubtless this poster hangs on the bedroom wall of thousands of Americans and I know that if I had seen it on those walls I would think it was pure hokum. But in Cho's personal life there has been little time for sentimentality. One knows that the poster has a powerful meaning.

As Cho says, "When we parted I told Anh she would have to be very independent now. We both understood that life was just desperate in Vietnam. She cried a lot and I had to make her stop crying.

"I told her she should be happy because I am going to America and that one day we will meet there and have a better standard of living. Then, she thinks I should go. It is very rare that a woman in my country can do that.

"Since then she tried to escape three times and it is not some game, she risks her life for it. The first time they were caught and thrown in jail. My daughter, Dao, almost died from diarrhea. She didn't have boiled water to drink. The second time was in November 1978 during the purge of Chinese citizens. But after four days at sea they have to go back because



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the middle of the fishing boat was cracked. And last spring they managed to get close to Malaysia when their boat tilted over and Anh thought she would die. She is not a good swimmer and she must carry our daughter. But she was lucky, they were close to the shore."

Cho's wife and daughter are now in one of the better Malaysian camps. He has received two letters from Anh and she appears to be gaining strength. Although at present he will not say it outright, it is rather apparent that Anh is the reason Cho has not yet used his free, special award winning dinner for two at the Arlington Hyatt House.

MOVING UP AND DOWN the nighttime streets in San Francisco's Tenderloin district are dolled-up, mean-looking homosexuals, pimps, whores, addicts, winos and, most ominously, men whose heavy coats in all likelihood serve to cover a gun or a knife. While every person there not making a living from violence is eager to get out, hundreds of Vietnamese of Chinese descent—the Hua—find it to be relatively hospitable: it is within easy walking distance of Chinatown where there are markets, like-minded people, and relaxed conversations. And for many, especially the newest immigrants, it is relatively free of the fear that was part of their recent Indochinese lives.

It is 1:30 a.m. and I am half asleep in the apartment of Van Huu Nghiep, 37, a former bicycle repairman currently unemployed. His apartment—which is really one ten-by-twenty foot room with a kitchen, a closet and a bathroom—smells from another apartment's fried chicken. Even though I can't sleep because people outside are yelling, water is dripping, there are animals five feet away which are rustling in the garbage and Nghiep's mother-in-law snores, the other ten people in this room appear to be in the deepest slumber. I recall—even as I am startled into complete awakeness by a darting rat—that most of the people have only arrived four days ago. That half the building's residents are junkies does not bother them. Until moving into this urban shanty, they had lived for ten months in Pulau Bidong.

According to Yip—to use his Mandarin name—"compared to others my escape was easy. We were 65 people in a small freighter, 12 meters long. For three nights and two days we were at sea and there were only a few incidents. Once we saw a suspicious boat but they weren't fast enough to chase us. A second time we saw a ship with eight people who had dark skins, suntans. We could not tell if they were Malay or pirates. The captain said they were pirates and we were all afraid because of the stories we had heard about robberies, rapes, and sinking of ships. That boat followed us for one-half hour but it couldn't catch up."

Eventually the boat arrived in Malaysia and his wife, his daughter and his brother were assigned to Camp Pulau Besar. After 10 months in the camp, a Houston organization sponsored Yip's family and they left Asia on a DC10. Houston was a nice place, he says, but like 80,000 other Indochinese in the U.S. Yip was lured away by California.

Yip is continuously in a good mood because within the last ten days, fifteen of his closest relatives have joined him. On July 26 his father, mother, three of his brothers and three sisters arrived. And on August 3 his wife's parents, her three sisters-in-law and two nieces brought the family to almost total unification. Still idling in a Malaysian camp are two sisters, one brother and one adopted brother—all unlucky because their boat was attacked by pirates. Yip does not know if his sisters were raped or whether this part of his family was robbed. But for the moment he is euphoric. "When I was in Vietnam," he says, "I thought the future was hopeless and we would never meet. But, now, we are together."

With my interpreter I join them in their first family dinner—composed largely of Chinese take-out food—in over four years. The mattresses are laid up against the wall and a clean white sheet carefully spread on the floor. Then the 21 of us sat, squatted or kneeled tightly together with no room to move to the side. I am acutely aware of how cramped the room is, but then I remember that 19 of this evening's diners have sat still on rocky boats for days under the hot sun of the South China Sea.

The family may be accustomed to crowding, but the landlord tells Yip that there are too many people in the apartment. We spend one afternoon looking at several new apartments, including one place decorated to look like an Asian opium den and then another place with nude male calendars on the wall. Yip notices but what shocks him are rents of $250 month for one-bedroom apartments in the Tenderloin. At present with his welfare income of $140 per week, it will be hard to stretch the money to cover two rents.

On our final day together Yip, his wife and two sisters-in-law go on an outing—and as if they've picked up the fever of old Berkeley—they go to a protest march. Hundreds of local Indochinese gather before San Francisco's City Hall to try to bring attention to the plight of the boat people. It is his third demonstration in eight months and he says that he "enjoys the freedom in America. In Vietnam I could not do this."

IT is axiomatic among long-time American refugee officials that the people who do best in the "new world" are the younger ones. "The Vietnamese in this respect are no different," says Jeannie McDaniels of the International Rescue Committee, "the younger ones can learn the language, they're open to newer ideas. Try as the older ones do, they usually just have too much invested in the old cultures." According to a recent study by the Transcentury Foundation, over a third of the Indochinese coming here are under fifteen. This partially accounts for the federal assistance, but most importantly it means that assimilation will occur at a dramatically high rate.

The family of Phuc Van Nguyen of Kansas City, Missouri, is an apt illustration. Phuc, 58, was a fisherman of considerable success in Vietnam. A devout Catholic who had left the North in 1954, he managed, despite little education, to become the captain of his own fishing boat in the South. Phuc provided a good income for his wife and five children. He was the unquestioned leader of his family.

But now, in Kansas City, Phuc cannot work and, occasionally, cannot even breathe. He suffers now from some kind of

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lung ailment, once described to me as asthma, another time as emphysema and still another time as tuberculosis. Whatever the name of the illness, it is sufficiently debilitating. Phuc is no longer the breadwinner—no longer his family's shepherd. He spends his days helping his wife babysit for the children of Vietnamese parents who have gone off to work. In a living room that looks like a homemade shrine with a picture of Christ resting on top of the stereo, Phuc tells me how "humiliating" it is to have had to flee Vietnam; he takes it as a personal failure. I talk to him a bit about "the big picture" but he dismisses my world view with a shrug.

For all practical purposes the torch has been passed to twenty-one-year-old Duc and his seventeen-year-old sister Tam. Duc, as small as his father but with shoulder length silky black hair and muscular build, works a forty-hour week as a welder. It is Duc who gets up at 5:00 A.M. and drives with five other Vietnamese to a plant that is forty minutes away.

As Duc drives to work he says, "I am worried about my father because he is sick in the lungs. He throws up sometimes and other times, like when he is sweeping, he has to stop. But my father wants to work very much.

"One time he told my uncle to get him an application for working at the factory. My father gave it to me but I wouldn't fill it out."

Occasionally there can be a bit of strain between father and son. "Once," says Duc, "my father got mad at me because I stayed out all night and he thinks that I smoke a reefer or drink beer. But I don't like these things. I just like to put the stereo on in the car and eat hamburgers and fries and just talk with my friends." But Duc still maintains his old allegiances. "Even if I get married," he adds, "I will stay at home with my parents because they are old."

Tam works a forty-hour week at a sewing machine in a dress factory where no matter how fast she sews her garments, a forewoman will throw more at her. The pace of her work is reminiscent of Chaplin in *Hard Times*.

While Tam's views do not seem to be as carefully considered as Duc's, the future is hers. She takes English classes religiously and is already planning to go on to a fourth and higher paying job. It is clear that unlike the preceding generation neither Duc nor Tam will allow themselves to be part of anybody's "Vietnamization" plan.

For the Indochinese it appears that in addition to hard work and aggressiveness, success will come most easily to those who have banded together. Already in southern California where one-fifth of the Vietnamese live, one can see the signs of prosperity with unity: in Los Angeles there is a Vietnamese deli, a Vietnamese take-out restaurant, a center for old people to learn English and YMCA's which cater to the young. In Kansas City, however, where two thousand Vietnamese live in relative isolation, such commercial and social services cannot exist.

The Indochinese are up against a prejudice as old as Know-Nothingism. U.S. immigration policymakers have been slow to recognize this and the results are overcrowded camps in Southeast Asia as well as death in the South China Sea.

I KEEP RECALLING two moments from my visits with these newest Americans. Both have to do with song. In Kansas City, under the watchful eyes of the picture of Jesus, I share Orange Nehis with Tam and her mother. We are listening to a tape of Vietnamese popular music. The singer, Thoi Trang, performs a popular song about the war. The ballad begins with several seconds of rapid gunfire and then Ms. Thoi sings about a boy who has gone to fight. With accompaniment from the whiney flutes and violins that seem ever present in popular eastern music, Thoi tells how a mother is worried that her boy will not come home. As the song ends there is more gunfire and then the mother learns about her son's death and the need to bury him. The rest of the song is about grass and trees. Tam's mother kneels, in a characteristic Vietnamese position, staring ahead misty-eyed. Tam herself, in what seems the universal teenage response to popular music, knows the words by heart and sings along.

Earlier, in San Francisco, as Yip was leaving the demonstration at City Hall, three American folk singers start a rendition of " We Shall Ovecome." My interpreter stops to translate for Yip. The middle-aged Indochinese bike fixer smiles and nods. He believes that the lyrics apply to the misfortune of his people.

Screen

THE BEST OF ENEMIES

HERZOG & KINSKI

THERE ARE strangers among us, and Werner Herzog is one of them. Klaus Kinski is another. In 1973, Herzog and Kinski made their first film together, *Aguirre, the Wrath of God*. Shot under impossible conditions in the jungles and rain forests of South America, the film produced a relationship between the director and actor so acrimonious that there were repeated threats of murder which resulted, at one point, in actual violence. As the title of a recent documentary on Herzog, *I Am My Films*, suggests, Herzog is obsessive about moviemaking.

When he came to the last scene of *Aguirre*, which occurs as a party split off from Pizarro's 16th-century search for El Dorado emerges from the mouth of the Amazon River, Herzog decided that some kind of wild animal should be let loose on the raft with Aguirre, who is the expedition's only survivor. Herzog therefore left the production company treading water in the river while he made his way to Rio de Janeiro or some other major coastal city. At the airport there he posed as an official of a European zoo, and stole an entire consignment of spider monkeys, which he took back to the location so they could swarm over the raft in the final scene. Kinski felt that Herzog dealt with human beings in much the same way as monkeys. After a month in the Peruvian and Brazilian jungles

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with Herzog, he felt as if he had been shanghaied rather than contracted to play a part in a movie. I don't remember whether it was Kinski who threatened to kill Herzog or vice versa, but it doesn't matter. Feelings between them were mutual.

In spite of this experience—or, spookier still, because of it—Kinski has now made two more films with Herzog, *Nosferatu the Vampire* and *Woyzeck*. At the joint press conference the two men held when *Nosferatu* was released, their relationship was clear. It's essentially the same relationship that existed between Dr. Caligari and his monster. At three o'clock one morning last year, Kinski received a phone call at his Paris apartment from Herzog, with whom he's had no contact since *Aguirre*. "Qui est là?" asked Kinski drowsily when he picked up the phone. "You *will* play Nosferatu," commanded Herzog. "Yes, I will," replied Kinski, who only realized months later, when he remembered having seen F. W. Murnau's 1922 film of *Nosferatu*, who the character was he had agreed to play. (Kinski had played the role of the crazed estate agent Renfield in Jesus Franco's 1970 *Count Dracula*, one of a series of lush British horror films starring Christopher Lee. But apparently Kinski didn't know that Nosferatu is another name for Dracula.)

The only episode in recent movie history more bizarre than this one is the story of how Herzog got Kinski to play Woyzeck. This time Kinski knew the material on which the film was to be based. He knew it all too well, having turned down in panic a chance to play the title role in *Woyzeck* on the stage some years before. An unfinished fragment written in 1836 by Georg Büchner, *Woyzeck* is a true story about how a soldier came to stab a prostitute by whom he had fathered a child. The play has about it some of Büchner's own desperation at the time of its writing, when he was a political fugitive from Germany who was attempting to support himself through anatomical studies. Already the author of a polemic, two plays and a novel, Büchner died shortly after beginning *Woyzeck*. He was only twenty-three.

During the intervening century and a half, the play has become something of a myth. A friend of mine who saw an avant-garde production of it a few years ago at Joseph Papp's Public Theater said it was the most powerful drama he'd ever seen there, and described its incomplete state as one in which you could see "little chunks and bits of Michelangelo sculpture emerging from the rough, unchiseled stone." Kinski said that once he had read the play, he couldn't even bear to have it in the apartment with him. After calling to refuse the part, he had to take the physical object itself, the pages with the words on them, outside and throw them away. Just reading the play made him feel as if he needed to be exorcized.

Because time equals money in such large amounts when a movie is in production, a director often has to work seven eighteen-hour days a week while he's shooting. As a result, many directors try to do absolutely nothing for at least a month after finishing a film, just to recuperate. But Herzog, as I was saying, is obsessive. Three days after the completion of shooting on *Nosferatu*, he began *Woyzeck*. (He has done this before, rushing off in 1976 to shoot the documentary *Soufriere* while still in the middle of editing *Heart of Glass*.) Kinski had only slightly longer between the two projects—two weeks—because the shooting schedule was arranged to allow time for the shaved head he has in *Nosferatu* to grow into the military crew cut he would need for *Woyzeck*. The shooting schedule was also arranged in such a way that scenes at Dracula's mountain schloss needed for the early parts of *Nosferatu* would be filmed last, at a location near the village in Moravia where *Woyzeck* was to be shot. That way the entire crew of the first film—from the executive producer right down to the lighting engineer and costumer, and including such Herzog veterans as editor Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus and cameraman Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein—could move on to the second film over a weekend.

When Herzog arrived to begin *Woyzeck*, however, he realized that Kinski was in a state. Taking physical hold of Kinski and looking him in the face, Herzog ordered, "You will let the pig loose again." And Kinski did. He went ahead with the role of Woyzeck despite the anxiety it gave him, which he somehow managed to subdue for the duration of the shooting. After he had completed his final scene, a night scene which was the last to be filmed, Kinski returned to the inn to bathe and get himself under control once more. He was gone only about twenty or thirty minutes, but when he returned, the village was deserted. The entire film crew had departed in the dead of night. After wandering around the village awhile, Kinski finally found Herzog, the only other member of the production company still there. Kinski says that it took him months to recover from playing the role of Woyzeck.

Since Kinski and Herzog concur in these stories, they are undoubtedly true. Yet you never would have guessed them from looking at *Woyzeck*. That's the extraordinary thing about the film. It's not extraordinary. In fact, the film's legend is almost better than the film itself. I wonder whether the power of Büchner's fragment and Kinski's terrible, negative inspiration didn't leave Herzog stymied for once. Having pushed himself too far by doing *Nosferatu* and *Woyzeck* back to back, Herzog couldn't rise to the occasion of the latter. His film somehow neutralizes Kinski's dread of the character instead of exploiting and revealing it. Whatever danger Herzog and Kinski may have been to each other in the past, they have now gotten over it. They have nothing but praise for each other. Herzog says Kinski is the greatest actor the movies have ever had, and he may well be right. Kinski's interpretation of Dracula in *Nosferatu* is a unique and brilliant one. But neither *Woyzeck* nor *Nosferatu* is Herzog's best film. It was on *Aguirre* that both Herzog and Kinski did their finest work, in the days when they were ready to kill one another.

(The first of three parts)

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE to give Commonweal for Christmas. See form on page 730.

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LeRoy Smith, Jr.

The Last Impertinence

God woke and found his dream was true:
Adam had burnt the wilderness
And, smug within his specialties,
Was rocketing towards paradise.

Damned clot, God muttered: he must know
Heaven's beyond the lip of space,
Beyond the last light-year's palest days
And the omnipotence of choice.

Anne Porter

The Weihnachts-Historie

When you wrote the Weihnachts-Historie, Heinrich Schütz,
you were near eighty.
You struck the gnarled root of Jesse
And from it sprang this intricate grove of music
Weaving a cage where the brightest nova that ever burned in
the sky
Sings like a thrush, sings for a poor child.
You swaddle and cradle the child in madrigals
And taking a psalm you twist him a royal crown.
You summon for him a river of angels that pour their voices
Into his broken shelter like sparks or abundant grain.
From around a fire of sticks in a frozen pasture
You fetch him the bleating of wooden flutes, and the first
hoarse carols.
Then out of this brambly, soaring and tangling triumph, strong
As the holiest stones of Europe,
A single voice shakes itself free,
The Aramaic lullaby
Floating light and alone down the Egyptian brook,
The shallow seasonal brook that travelers drink.
He has begun to travel with us. He tastes the brackish
lukewarm
Water, and is jarred by the humps in the stony road.

James Sullivan

As Sun, As Sea

It is easy to disturb
The current in another's soul, hard
To give more than you take away.
What one must do
Is build his own nonentity
Into a thing worth referring to,
A standard of being. Then he can run
Without curbing the running in some other realm.
Then he can be
As the sun is to the earth,
To the river as the sea.

Joan Walsh

Winter Devotions: Six O'Clock Mass

For a year, there, I dipped the sun
Up before it,
Out in the runnel street
Dark with wind, whistling with cold,
running toward a door that opened
Inward.
Throwing up my footsteps on the cold
Stone fronts of houses steeped in sleep,
Until they arched and tapped behind me
My friend, my self, showing me the
Sound of my own running,
Running at my back.
This Mass was made for wounded only.
Here no hats, no missals touched with silk.
Two candles, one man, two boys, the basement smell
Of fingers in the font.

Our backs are bent, Judaicized,
In worship, grief and want of sleep.
We swallow strength, we sign our brows,
The sun strips darkness from the street.

Jock Henderson

Feeling the Heat's Pyrotechnics

The harsh day burns hotter than the harshest
Hell at the earth's core. Dazzling smudge fireballs
Suck up all shadows. The light is purity's white.
Overhead the incendiary solar wind glares so
Platinum hot its heat seems solid.

If this inferno withers my grace,
If my mind turns black and my sweat
Dries saline traces onto parched skin,
If wobbling yet I plod on stubby knees,
Even so, a spirit still virile lurks within.

Let the others flee to their tunnels.
Let them try to patch the cracks in the walls
As black heat flame throwers fry inner souls.
In vain, I try to separate; but still
Before me, the carrion children pass.

Let the heroes strive against the blast.
They can hope to eat fire for a day or two.
Let the magnificent ones dangle from the meathook;
Let them twist, putrify, and ripen
To death under the black noon sky.

"In the name of the father, son, and
Doomsday economy, may the gods rise up today.
We beseech thee, powers that be,
To protect the meek on their knees:
Freeze them an igloo where they can stay."

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Books: TERRORISTS VS. TALKERS

CANNIBALS AND MISSIONARIES

Mary McCarthy

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $10.95, 369 pp.

Margaret Wimsatt

MARY McCARTHY'S work, particularly her non-fictional prose, bears witness to her extended interest in political matters. But never before has a novel of hers, not even the timely *The Groves of Academe* (1951), approached so closely to the tall bloody headlines of last year, last week, next week. Life imitates art; current events are invoked, off-page, in this particular fiction. But present happenings in Iran are not what her book is about. The book is about the philosophies of terrorism, the attitudes attendant upon ownership, and the fallacies of liberalism, at least as sometimes embodied.

Her cast of characters, sometimes difficult to keep straight, numbers about thirty, including walk-ons—three groups, written with three pens. First we are introduced to a committee of American liberals in economy class on their way to Iran to investigate alleged abuses in the Shah's jails. Up in first class is traveling a group of wealthy art collectors on a tour of Iran's museums and antiquities. When the plane is hijacked, a rivalry develops between the two groups; on whose behalf has the takeover occurred? The terrorists come on stage gradually, and are the only characters to develop as the plot unfolds. Miss McCarthy slants her sympathies in their direction, her antipathies towards the wealthy, but she lavishes the most care, the most words, on the members of the committee, so that we know them best, for what it's worth. They include two of the most self-satisfied fools she has ever drawn, one of them a villain, several ordinary empty-heads, and Sophie Weil, a journalist, who speaks in part for the author, and is punished accordingly. In a novel of suspense, the reviewer must not give away the ending, but I think it is fair to remark that the nastiest people go home, if not all *free*, at least all intact.

It is a pleasure to recognize Miss McCarthy's real affection for and knowledge of the Netherlands, her empathy with its people, her understanding of the nation's fragile position, geographically and physically. If the novel has a hero, it is Van Vliet de Jonge, Dutch Parliamentarian, and readers will learn a lot about his country. And for anti-hero, Lucifer, there is Jeroan, chief of the terrorists, a Dutchman too, who, viewing the Rijksmuseum's treasures as a child, had desired to become an artist. He became an artist of revolution instead, and fell fatally in love with a captured Vermeer.

In spite of its spots of fast action, especially near the end, the novel is often tedious. Doubtless in real life too it is true that kidnapping and ransom have their long hours of waiting, on the airport tarmac, at the jail. Perhaps real-life victims too have nothing to do but talk at length, reflect endlessly, or keep a journal. But the novelist should manage things better, and McCarthy has not.

And why do all the wealthies speak like Vassar girls, *circa* 1934, even the husbands, even the supposedly rebellious daughter? Why the title, which, though striking, does not apply? But most important to refute is the author's assumption that works of art are more important than human beings. (The arguments for the value of each human life are put into the mouth of her most fatuous liberal, a Protestant clergyman.) "If a hostage or two got killed, it had to be seen in the perspective of the greater good of the greater number. But works of art were a different type of noncombatant, not to be touched with a ten-foot pole by any government respectful of 'values.' It was in the nature of civilians to die sooner or later . . . while works of art by their nature and in principle were imperishable. In addition, they were irreplaceable, which could not be said of their owners." (So reflects a politician, presented as intelligent and good-willed.) This point of view is illustrated by recent examples: the kidnapping of the Kenwood House Vermeer, the desecration of the Pietà, red paint sprayed on Mona Lisa. The loss of treasure in war is real and sad, the destruction of Coventry Cathedral or the lesser fine churches of Cologne—but *this* does not add up to *that*. In spite of Miss McCarthy's opinion, the average reader does not "feel a thrill of horror" at the vandalism of art, and would probably rather have saved Aldo Moro than any picture anywhere.

Eighty-five theses

FAITH & SEXISM

GUIDELINES FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS

Marianne Sawicki

Seabury, $3.95, 93 pp.

Mary Perkins Ryan

HIGH PRAISE is surely due to all those concerned with this project—planners, consultants and particularly, of course, the author of the book—for their courage in thus tackling the many and complex issues involved in trying to weaken the influence of sexism in Catholic religious education. In fact, the greatest value of the book is, perhaps, that it makes the reader newly aware of the many questions involved in any such efforts—for example, problems of language and of God-language . . . problems of interpreting the scriptures, doctrinal and moral formulations and traditional practices . . . problems of cultural conditioning, of authority, of realistic possibilities of change in the church.

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Moreover, any such project has to contend with the difficulties posed by the many existing shades of sexism and of anti-sexism, and of the lack of agreement as to what constitutes sexist language and behavior in many concrete cases.

For a person or a group today to deal with all these sensitive areas in making practical suggestions for religious educators, obviously, then, a pioneer effort is required. As the author says at the end of her prologue: "Although these guidelines emerge from prayerful reflection on the Gospel and the signs of the times, they remain provisional in character and advisory in intent," and they should be judged as such.

The idea of composing anti-sexist guidelines for the benefit first of producers of catechetical materials, and then also of anyone engaged in any form of religious instruction, originated with the Department of Religious Education of the U.S. Catholic Conference. A committee of the Department, after some preliminary planning, hired the author and convened a symposium of some thirty persons to contribute their ideas. The resulting material was collated and given to the author, who worked closely with the Department's committee as she planned the format of the book and wrote a first draft. This was submitted to the participants in the symposium who offered further suggestions. The final draft was then accepted by the committee, and the book was published. Perhaps this method of composition explains why there are eighty-five guidelines, each apparently given equal importance, when—I would think—many fewer, arranged in some kind of hierarchy, would have been more effective.

It seems that there is no regular procedure for any pre-publication episcopal review of materials published by the various departments of the U.S.C.C. However in this case, it happened that a copy of the published book was given to someone who became concerned about certain statements and emphases and brought the book to the attention of Bishop Kelly, the General Secretary of the U.S.C.C., who then consulted the other four bishops who form its executive committee. They agreed that the U.S.C.C. should not sponsor the book, that publication must be stopped and the published copies which claimed this sponsorship should be destroyed. But they expressed real regret at having to make this decision since they had found so much of value in the book. They therefore not only paid the author for her work but also returned its copyright to her and said she was quite free to publish it elsewhere.

The book as now published by Seabury consists of a seventeen-page Prologue introducing "the major theological and philosophical arguments supporting the rest of the guidelines," followed by the eighty-five guidelines themselves. These are grouped under the ten headings used in Chapter V: Principal Elements of the Christian Message for Catechesis, of the National Catholic Directory, with an additional group dealing with "Other Concerns" as diverse as "Art," "Notes for Parents" and "Policies."

The Prologue represents, it seems to me, a good try at presenting a Christian case for opposing sexism considering the complex issues involved. But the case could have been made much more strongly, I think, if liberation from sexism had been located in the larger context of our need for liberation from all forms of prejudice and stereotyping—racism, top-nation-ism, etc.

It is, of course, impossible to comment on every guideline. My favorite is No. 39 "Explain that the Creed and the words of consecration mean to include women as 'men.' . . ." Why not give this excellent, if to some of us obvious, directive a wider application, to help people who need it in all their dealings with classic English usage in prayers, religious literature and elsewhere?

> *The change of catechetical language required by the goal of justice for the sexes is a change altogether in line with the tradition. No radical alteration of the Christian symbol system is needed . . . One need not look outside revelation to find images of equality between the sexes, nor non-masculine analogues for the loving care of God. The essentials are there in the word of God. The Gospel is the sole motive behind these guidelines as they aim to bring about a more complete understanding of what Christians have always believed, and a fuller participation in its reality.* —Marianne Sawicki
> *Faith & Sexism*

A comment needs to be made on No. 16: "Use 'Reign of God' instead of 'Kingdom of God.' Prefer the proper name Yahweh to the title Lord." I am all for "reign" as being a more active word than "kingdom." But experts in Jewish-Christian relations tell us that the use of 'Yahweh,' the Name God revealed to Moses, seems blasphemous to Jewish people. This is why the New American Bible, like older translations, follows the traditional usage where the Name occurs, and print in capital letters to show that here "the LORD" stands for the Name. It is a pity that the author and her consultants were apparently not aware of this problem, since we certainly don't want to offend our Jewish brothers and sisters when we are opposing sexism.

Also, I would agree with what has been reported as one of the bishops' objections: the use of phrases such as: "The systematic misogynism of theology. . . ." "Describe the systematic discrimination against women by the church." (No. 34). "Systematic" implies conscious, deliberate planning on the part of church officials through the ages, which is surely an over-stated simplification of the results of a very complex interweaving of Christianity with various cultures. And I became very weary of the phrase, "the sin of sexism." Why not explain once the sense in which sexism is a "sin," and then just say "sexism"?

But, to repeat, readers should keep in mind the pioneer nature of this book. And I hope that it has many readers, especially among educators—including parents—who will use it as a means of examining their own attitudes and practices and of becoming aware of the many problems involved in advocating any practical steps in this area. I think that the bishops were wise in feeling—whatever their reasons—that their sponsorship would give these guidelines more author-

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ity than such a pioneer venture could warrant. But I am glad that they were produced and have been published under non-official auspices as a many-sided contribution to serious thought and discussion about "faith and sexism."

Through fantasies to faith

SECRET RENDEZVOUS

Kobo Abe

Translated by Juliet Winters Carpenter

Knopf, $8.95, 179 pp.

Irving Malin

KOBO ABE refuses to write a conventional novel. He gives us a series of "notebooks" (and epilogue); within the "notebooks" are charts, banks of information, and clues. The fictional structure is a labyrinth, a "secret rendezvous" of science and poetry.

His hero is a salesman of jogging shoes. These shoes enable him to do "effortless somersaults without a flying start, like a trampoline acrobat." They are described at length—the novel perversely exaggerates objects; walls, shoes, bodies and notebooks are made to dominate the world—and they make us assume that the salesman can turn *everywhere with great ease*.

But the salesman discovers that he can barely find his wife (and his feelings about their marriage). She disappears into an odd, multi-structured hospital—it is clinic, torture-garden, and "home"—in which nothing (or everything) appears *planned*. When he looks for her, he encounters various disturbing obstacles. The assistant director is, for example, a centaur-like creature who can be potent only after a body-graft. His secretary was a test-tube baby; she cannot show many human feelings. The security guards are deliberate (?) fascists. The hospital is suggestively made up of sex and violence; the salesman discovers finally that the perverse roles—his wife is at one point the Masked Woman in a scary, funny festival to celebrate the hospital's founding—and insane transformations are the underlying pattern.

Abe is, thus, giving us a violent and nightmarish work. He deliberately mingles fear and pleasure to force us toward a philosophical position. If we assume that the salesman is offering a sane account of an insane hospital (world), then we are shaken by the cruel pattern of the labyrinth. If we assume that the salesman *imagines* the hospital, the disappearance and reappearance of his wife etc., then we are reading an obsessive projection of a fantasy (or series of fantasies). We are, therefore, put into a mirror-position with the salesman; we cannot take hold of one person or event or object and call it *real* The novel outmaneuvers us; like the hospital (or the narrator's mind) it is full of deceptions, conceits, and reflections—and it suggests that "reality itself"—that is, the world outside of the fiction-world is ultimately inexplicable.

There is another turn—another part of the labyrinth. By isolating the salesman and the reader, Abe suggests that only by accepting an underlying pattern to existence, can we conclude (or even begin) our earthly endeavors. He writes a testament, a document of faith, even when he seems to mock belief in all solutions. The "secret rendezvous" is, in one way, the unforeseen meeting with fate, destiny, divine order—that final encounter by which we understand the meaning of our past and present "somersaults."

I do not mean to imply that Abe is a "salesman" of faith. He offers few glib sermons. He makes us work (as readers and believers). But the very beauty and toughness of his novel lies in its refusal to take the easy road. He resembles Kafka in this respect (and many others): he paradoxically affirms the hidden order of the universe by dwelling on secret, ominous, ghostly passageways.

REVIEWERS

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In brief

SIDESHOW: KISSINGER, NIXON AND THE DESTRUCTION OF CAMBODIA, *by William Shawcross, Simon and Schuster, $13.95, 467 pp., Pocket Books, $2.95.*

Any university or trustee thinking of nominating Henry Kissinger for an honorary degree (probably to get a "celebrity" for graduation)—indeed, anyone who still thinks Kissinger worthy of a shred of respect—should read *Sideshow*, this painful story of how Cambodia has become, in Hanoi's truthful words, ". . . a land soaked with blood and tears . . . hell on earth." It is a tale of unmitigated cruelty: the cruelty of Khmer Rouge soldiers (mostly teenagers) who chop up and disembowel their enemies and display their severed heads on a table; and the cruelty of American policy-makers—Nixon and Kissinger—who could not see their victims but—acting out the Nixon "madman theory of war" (calculated to keep opponents off balance) and dedicated to the mystique of bombing as a show of manly strength—carried out the secret and illegal bombing and disastrous invasion that brought on Cambodia's internal collapse.

The initially dispassionate reader will come to agree, at least emotionally, with Congressman Pete McCloskey, who said after a 1975 visit to Phnom Penh, "If I could have found the military or State Department leader who has been the architect of this policy, my instinct would be to string him up . . . what they have done to the country is greater evil than we have done to any country in the world, and wholly without reason, except for

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COMMONWEAL

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our own benefit to fight against the Vietnamese."

As we know, those responsible have not been strung up. One still lives comfortably in San Clemente. The other is teaching at Georgetown.

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

THE COMMUNITY OF THE BELOVED DISCIPLE, *by Raymond E. Brown, Paulist, $6.95 cloth, $3.95 paper, 204 pp.*

The community of the book's title is traced from its origins before the Gospel was written through the period of its composition and later through the period of the Johannine epistles and finally to its dissolution in the post-epistles period. This is the development, in *abbreviated* form. Jews who saw Jesus as the Davidic Messiah were joined by others stressing a Mosaic figure. This led gradually to a pre-existence christology that alienated "the Jews" who expelled these Christians from their synagogues (c. 55-85 A.D.). The "Beloved Disciple" (not John) is the dominant figure throughout. Probably moving now (c. 90) to the diaspora, they accepted Gentiles. A continued high christology led to excessive interpretations by some members (proto-docetic, proto-gnostic) who then became the secessionists berated by the author of the epistles (c. 100). Finally, what remained of the community accepted the official teaching of the Great Church into which it was assimilated, along with its writings, in the second century.

Throughout the complex development issue was constantly being taken with the "world" (non-believers), "the Jews" (leaders opposed to the community), followers of the Baptist, crypto-Christians (Jews privately, not publicly, believing in Jesus), "Jewish Christians" (believers with a low christology), apostolic Christians (Jewish and Gentile heirs of the Christianity of Peter and the Twelve). Clearly the Johannine eagle soared "with talons bared for the fight" (p. 24). Here is a scholarly but engrossing, ingenious but extremely well researched, ecumenical but committed study of "the life, loves, and hates of an individual church in New Testament times" (sub-title).

EUGENE H. MALY

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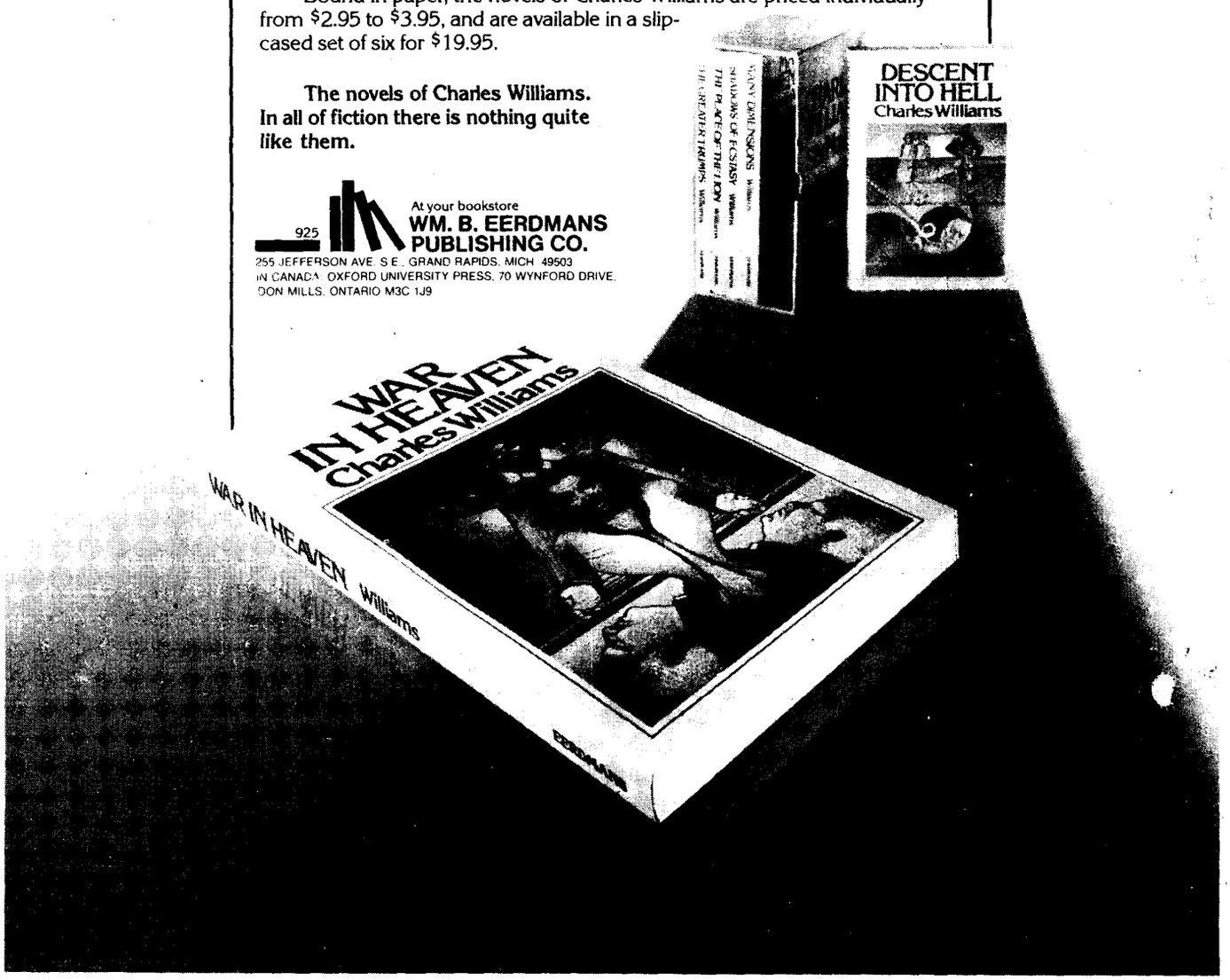

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